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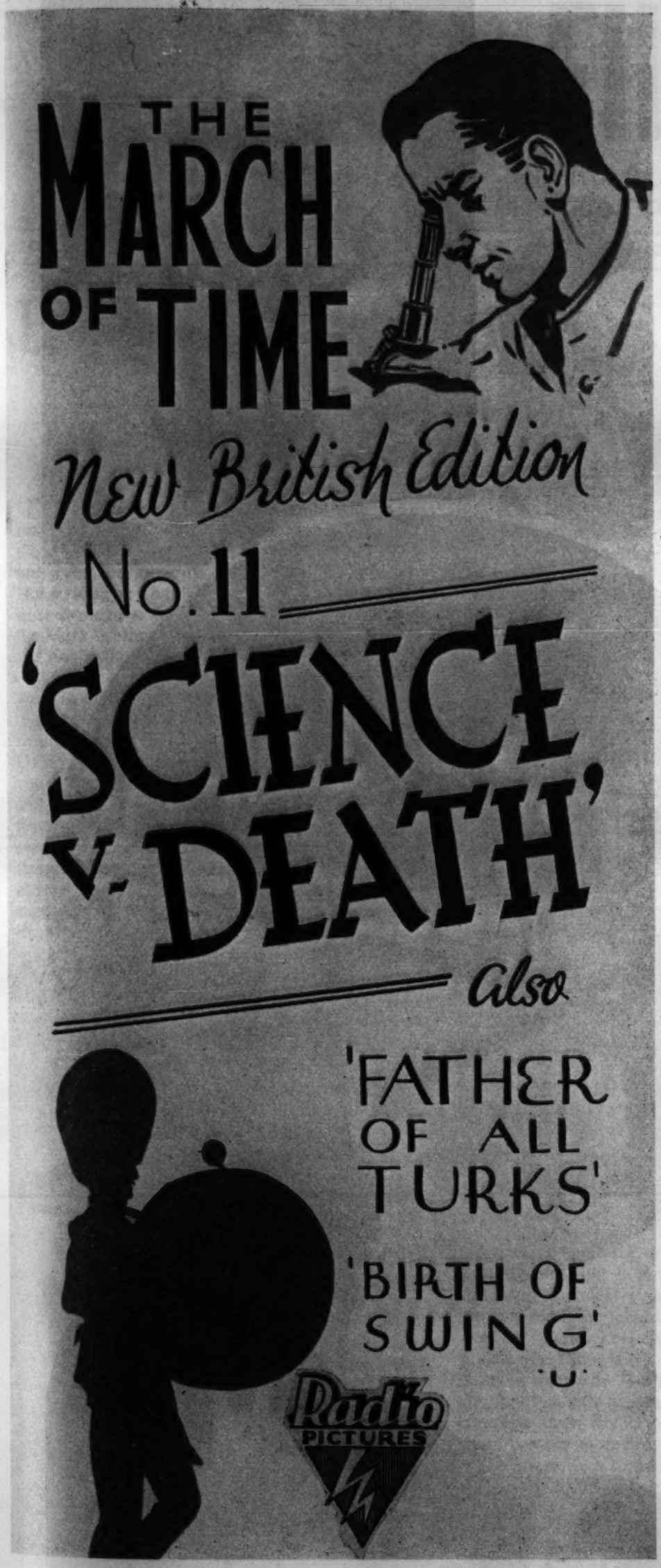

LIST OF BOOKINGS TO MATURE ON "MARCH OF TIME" SECOND YEAR

For its second year "MARCH OF TIME" has arranged contracts for showing in more than 1200 Cinemas. Below is a selection from a list that covers the British Isles and Irish Free State.

CINEMA.	PLACE.
Forum ...	Southampton.
Futurist ...	Birmingham.
Plaza ...	Regent Street.
Paramount ...	Tottenham Court Rd.
Capitol ...	Cardiff.
Westover ...	Bournemouth.
Kings ...	Bristol.
Paramount ...	Manchester.
Whiteladies	Bristol.
Paramount ...	Liverpool.
Regal ...	Torquay.
Paramount ...	Leeds.
Paramount ...	Newcastle.
Paramount ...	Glasgow.
Savoy ...	Brighton.
Astoria ...	Cliftonville.
Granada ...	Dover.
Central or Playhouse	Folkestone.
Rivoli ...	Southend.
Regent ...	Gt. Yarmouth.
Marina ...	Lowestoft.
Majestic or Ritz	Oxford.
Super Electra, Palace	Oxford.
Olympia ...	Newport, Mon.
Castle ...	Merthyr.
Beau Nash ...	Bath.
Pavilion ...	Ramsgate.
Silver Cinema	Worcester.
Theatre Royal	Preston
Synod Hall	Edinburgh.
Palace Grand or Winter Gdn.	Blackpool.
Capitol ...	Dublin.
Grafton ...	Dublin.
Odeon ...	South Harrow.
Empire ...	Mile End.
Empress ...	Hackney.
Commodore	Hammersmith.
Forum ...	Fulham Road.
Forum ...	Ealing.
Dominion ...	Southall.
Embassy ...	Harrow.
Carlton ...	Winchmore Hill.
Ritz ...	Bowes Park.
Cameo ...	Bear Street.
Alma or Empire	Luton.
Bruce Grove	Tottenham.
Coliseum ...	Harrow.
Tatler ...	Charing Cross Road.
Tussauds ...	Baker Street.
Lido ...	Golders Green.
Ritz ...	Edgware.
South Cinema	Hackney.
Hippodrome	Willesden.
Ritz ...	Neasden.
Olympia ...	Shoreditch.
Palaceum ...	Commercial Road.
Rialto, Plaza or Ritz	Maidenhead.
Hippodrome	Poplar.
Rex	Stratford.
Carlton ...	Upton Park.
Palace ...	Kensal Rise.
Coronation	Manor Park.
Capitol ...	Barking.

CINEMA.	PLACE.
Princess ...	Dagenham.
Blue Hall ...	Edgware Road.
Dominion ...	Walthamstow.
Queens ...	Bayswater.
Regal ...	Uxbridge.
Majestic ...	Woodford.
Ritz ...	Harringay.
Savoy ...	Acton.
Savoy ...	Enfield.
Curzon ...	Mayfair.
Tatler ...	Liverpool.
Kings ...	Liverpool.
Princes ...	Liverpool.
Empire ...	Chatham.
Ritz Central or Palace	Maidstone.
Pavilion ...	Cork
Grand Central	Dublin.
Majestic, Regal Super or Plaza	Gravesend.
Victoria ...	Cambridge.
Hippodrome	Rotherhithe.
Palace ...	Camberwell.
Playhouse ...	Balham.
Mayfair ...	Tooting.
Majestic ...	Mitcham.
Savoy ...	Croydon.
Hippodrome	Croydon.
Regal ...	Purley.
Majestic or St. James	Kings Lynn.
Savoy ...	Wandsworth
Prince of Wales	Lewisham.
Capitol ...	Forest Hill.
Capitol ...	Blackheath.
Theatre ...	Elephant & Castle.
Hippodrome	Putney.
Savoy ...	Teddington.
Trocadero ...	Southport.
Wembley Hall Cinema.	Wembley.
Odeon ...	Wimbledon.
Odeon ...	Barnet.
Hippodrome or Empire	Greenwich.
Odeon ...	Haverstock Hill.
State & Rialto	Dartford.
Odeon ...	Finchley.
Dominion ...	Hounslow.
Cranstons ...	Glasgow.
Hippodrome	Belfast.
Odeon ...	Derby.
Palace ...	Leicester.
Theatre Royal	Bradford.
Pioneer ...	Dewsbury.
Theatre Royal	Halifax.
Hippodrome	Sheffield.
Princes ...	Portsmouth.
Tivoli or Troxy	Portsmouth.
Cinema ...	Aberdare.
Radio Centre	East Grinstead.
Exchange ...	Lincoln.
Regal ...	Watford.
Odeon ...	Chingford.
Ritz ...	Doncaster.
Dorchester ...	Hull.
Majestic ...	West Hartlepool.
Elite ...	Middlesbrough.

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world FILM news

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS
(INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY)

VOL. 2 NO. 3 PRICE: ONE SHILLING JUNE 1937

BLEST PAIR OF SIRENS

By Basil Wright

ARS gratia artis—if M.G.M.'s pregnant motto were ever embodied in any other form than that of a yawning lion, I would vote for a cameo representing the heads of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. For how many years now have they preserved the integrity of their human comedy? Not so long as Chaplin, perhaps, but they have at least avoided a Messiah complex. Longer than the Marx brothers, whose only serious rivals they are, and will continue to be.

Whether or no they are to be listed with the great clowns depends on your affections. Maybe they are too near your personal heart. Their troubles are your troubles—magnified to the stars. If they try to move a piano they suffer not merely your rasped shins, but all the woes of Sisyphus, and those not once, but over and over again, with fiendish variations. They have but to touch an everyday object; unhesitatingly it turns and rends them. At no point in their progress through an ordinary world can they be free from the unexpected disaster, the Nemesis which spares not the innocent.

How innocent they are. Fate always finds them unprepared, though Hardy, in silent anguish, mimes his certainty that is only to be expected, that it is as usual Laurel's fault. Which Laurel tearfully admits, but wonders still at the Providence which turns each innocent gesture into the wilful smiting down of his friend and partner.

Recently they have increased their philosophical scope. Sound gave them tongues with which to ease their woes, and they have discovered the powers of song and dance as an antidote to disaster. Their dance in *Way Out West* puts them, with Chaplin, among the few great mimes.

They epitomise the great tradition of teamwork in comedy which originated with Mack Sennett. Any assessment of their genius must pay tribute to him, to Hal Roach, their spiritual father, to James Parrott and James Home, their directors, to their screen colleagues such as the divine Finlayson, and last but not least, the anonymous masters who cut their films. Note, too, that in *Way Out West* a production credit goes to Stan Laurel. This crystallises a long existing suspicion that it is his genius which evolves the general line of the films and many of the more important gags.

Laurel, in fact, might have been a great individual comedian in the Chaplin tradition. But, perhaps because he felt he was too near Chaplin and Langdon in personality, he sensibly preferred to team up with Hardy, whose superb control of physical gesture, to say nothing of his generous proportions, made a perfect foil to the more fluid and incalculable posturing of Laurel.

The partnership can now never dissolve without disaster, and so far the rumours of splits and quarrels have regularly failed to materialise.

It would be waste of time to analyse an individual film, but it is worthwhile to note how certain of their early gags have been developed into an infallible technique.

Mutual destruction, for instance, as when they smash up Finlayson's house while Finlayson destroys their car. This technique is very elaborate, for each side waits patiently for the other to complete each item, thus ensuring a perfectly equal balance of destroyed property.

Variations on a simple theme are also a fundamental of most of their films. In *Aerial Antics* the attempt to fix a wireless aerial on the roof of Laurel's house precipitated Hardy off the roof into a goldfish pond at least five times. Each time a different gag-variation appeared, until the

comedy passed into the realms of cutting, and the final fall was but a flight of birds and the sound of an almighty splash. Eisenstein would have been proud to do it.

But greatest of all is the *Delayed Reaction*. Faced with a sudden revelation of monstrous import, these two innocents seldom take it in till minutes later. Once they tied up their employer in a sack and fell to kicking him—under the impression that he was Fra Diavolo. During this process Fra Diavolo himself appeared on a balcony and made them a sweeping bow. With old-world courtesy Hardy paused a moment from his labours and returned an elaborate salute. Not until he had returned to his kicking did the full meaning of the situation hit him. His convulsive movement of realisation was a masterpiece of timing.

But timing, the secret of all good comedy, is seen at its best with Laurel and Hardy. It is my ambition to visit Hollywood for the sole purpose of watching them make a film. It must be a solemn, serious, and probably bad-tempered process—but what an education in the elements of good movie.

Maybe you don't find them funny? Then you are my enemy, and I hope you will many times be forced to sit through a Laurel and Hardy feature film, tortured by the unceasing laughter of an audience of ordinary people who realise, if only subconsciously, that they are looking at a film which sums up more simply than any philosophical treatise the need for laughter, and supplies it in the form of a thin diffident Cockney and a fat man from the Southern States.

It's A Babbitt's Paradise— Yes Sir.

by Russell Ferguson

In a deep valley of Tibet, cut off from the world by an impassable range of mountains, lies Babbitt's paradise. Mr. Frank Capra has just returned from this strange place with a picture of it which is of great interest to students of Babbitt's social philosophy and ideals. The film is called *Lost Horizon*. Babbitt's paradise is called Shangri-la.

It is a wonderful place. Gold crops out and may be picked up without the trouble of mining. In the fertile fields, the menial work is done by a happy and contented subject-race sharing out the bounties of Nature in Christian communism and plying village handicrafts in the Gandhi manner. If you ask for a glass of water they give you a dozen cans of booze. The marriage customs are of the Melanesian kind, and the women of the subject-race are so charming and accommodating that brothels are unheard of. Plenty of booze and women. Yes, sir.

If you weary of Arcadian delights, or if like Babbitt you have aspirations to culture, you have only to climb the long, broad stairway to reach the palace of the Grand Lama and his Grand Vizier. Here you will find a synthetic heaven combining the Taj Mahal, Angkor Wat, the gardens of the Tuileries, and the finest Metro-Goldwyn interiors, with French windows and Mexican balconies. The Grand Vizier himself will receive you. He is dressed sometimes like the Archbishop of Canterbury and sometimes like a Chinese Mandarin. He will entertain you to a meal choicer than you could buy in the swellest Chicago restaurant. The wine will be of the best, and he will discourse to you of the priceless art-treasures around you and the contentment of the subject-race below. He speaks to you like a bishop and calls you "my son." He has class. Yes, sir.

After the meal, a beautiful but elusive princess will play European music on a grand piano specially carried by porters over the impassable mountain for her to play on. She is dressed in a Paris gown, but next time you see her, she will have on silk pyjamas or riding kit. Perhaps you will come across her teaching little Oriental children to sing Brahms's Cradle Song, the way the girl did in that other picture. When she moves about, a cloud of birds marks her passage, wheeling about her head the way they did in the Irish fairy-tale about Angus Mac-an-Og. You will ride after her, but she will outpace you. Soon she will be swimming naked in a pool, and you will nearly spy on her, but a squirrel will warn her and she will hide in the water-lilies. By-and-by you will catch her. It will be a romance. Yes, sir. The village girls are all right for those who like them, but this romance has class. She will tell you that although she is not a native princess, she was "almost born" here. You will talk about "magnificent concepts." She will tell you that she sent for you because in you she "saw a man whose life was empty." By-and-by, she will run away from you and you will run after her and kiss her. Then you will know that you have found your mate.

"Lost Horizon"

Another day, the Grand Vizier will take you to see the Grand Lama. He is two hundred years old and is going to die, because now that he has found you his work is finished. He could live on, if he wanted, because hardly anybody ever dies here unless he wants to, but he is going to make you the Grand Lama in his place, because you are so wise and brave and handsome and such a great soldier and diplomat. This lets him out. He will tell you how he founded this Christian communist colony two centuries ago because he could see the time coming when the nations would all be fighting and "exulting in the technique of murder." He talks about the "Christian ethic." He certainly knows some classy phrases. And he has the low-down on the international situation. Yes, sir.

Then he will die, and at the same moment a big candle beside his chair will go out. You will cry for a little, but you are too manly to cry for long. Just as you are about to accept your fate, another little princess tells you that the whole thing is a pack of lies, she's not eighty at all, she's just as young as she looks. You believe her, and battle your way over the impassable mountains. She turns into an old woman in your arms. You turn about, become a "devil-eyed stranger" and battle your way back again. The End.

In the Strand, there are no buses, because the strike is still on. Strike? There would be no strikes if people could think the way Babbitt thinks, in magnificent concepts. What we want is less of this striking. We want some place like Shangri-la, with communism for the working people and plenty of palaces and art-treasures for people like you and me who can appreciate them. And plenty of religion. Yes, sir.

EDITORIAL

A Matter of Flags

IT IS PROPER in a film paper to say a word about the Coronation, for the one thing in which the cinema need not fear comparison with the State is the art of showmanship. It takes a good film to beat the Navy on parade and the Navy on parade in a high sea stretches cinema to the tape; the Air Force display at Hendon lacks hardly a trifle of what it takes to complete the splendour of a de Mille spectacle; the funeral of Earl Haig had, shall we say, something of the tempo of *Potemkin*; but the standard of measurement is still with the cinema. We are brothers in arms of every guardsman who swaggers a busby at the Palace (Buckingham). But no one will deny that we do the job on a bigger scale.

Speaking strictly professionally therefore, we feel like asking the Office of Works if they are quite satisfied with the show they put up.

There was something to stir the heart under the broad banners of the City. Cheapside and Fleet Street with their great red crosses and single swords had the weight and authority of history.

In Whitehall and Trafalgar Square, by St. James's and the seats of government, the case was different. They represented the centre itself and all the proud splashes of red across the face of the world. Behind them were the Dominions and the Colonies—how many—and all they stood for. They represented Britain and all *it* stood for, in countries and cities and counties and towns, in industries and guilds and municipalities. If ever a showman had an opportunity to fly the flags of God's good earth or Empire and the fulness thereof, some fellow at the Office of Works had. And he missed it by a mile.

There were elephants for Ceylon, lions for Rhodesia, black swans for Australia, and heaven knows what other bewildering fauna and flora he might have found himself flying on May 12th, 1937. But, poor man, the wonder did not stir in him, and it did not stir in the streets he decked. The people of the world might have gone away moved that so many fields had been tilled from this little country in so small a time, and more deeply moved that we had proudly remembered them. They, unfortunately, did not.

We make this professional comment for another reason. This thing that was wrong with the poor Office of Works man—may they whip the epaulettes from him and never give him anything larger than a Birmingham shopping week to do in future—is what is wrong with our British films. We, too, forget the many fields we till from this little country and, like the Office of Works, forget the cities and counties and towns, the industries, guilds and municipalities, which lie beyond the outskirts of London. The disease, we fear, is a general one; and it is time we had a doctor for it.

Obscurely and without publicity

EDITORIAL ATTENTION is rightly reserved for only the most important of films. Of these, believe it or not, is an obscure film called *Laughing Irish Eyes*. You have never seen it and probably never will. We have not even seen it ourselves. But editorial attention it gets because it has done something fantastic in the annals of present day film. It has made three times more than it cost. The films that are bragged about in this and other papers bring back as often as not only a third of what they cost. *Laughing Irish Eyes*, obscurely and without publicity, humbly and without star, costs eight thousand and grossed twenty-five.

There is a moral in this. We asked a Newcastle showman to tell us and this is what he said. "Big starring names are not necessary as long as the story has guts, interpolated with plenty of slapstick comedy and songs. Keep the thing moving as fast as possible and never mind angles and expensive settings. Make a film for the smalls. The only thing you get making films for the luxury audiences is the luxury of misinterpreting their sense of entertainment and losing money."

There it is then, the word we have all been waiting for, which will cut through the jabbers of film debate and bring the British film to earth. "Big names not necessary . . . as long as there is guts . . . comedy . . . movement." Within that formula one might put Shakespeare, Defoe, any one of a dozen of the great ones.

So we had better think again when we hear these plans for hundred and fifty thousand pound productions and of the sumptuous studios and settings which are to match us with Hollywood. The word from Newcastle sounds far more sensible and, even for the art of cinema, far more promising. Two hundred per cent on the cost is a nice margin to play with; and who more than the artist wants margins? It is in the margin that he does his stuff.

W. R. Fuller, Esq.

A KIND WORD FOR the Governors of the British Film Institute. They have got behind the members of the British Sub-Standard Association and asked the Board of Trade to implement the Moyne proposal for a quota on short films. They point out, rightly, that the educational field depends on the short films which have been first made for the theatres. They note that encouragement of short films at the theatre end will in due time mean that more good films are available to the children in the schools.

Wise as this is, we have a special reason for throwing up the editorial hand in salute. If we guess rightly, there was a good deal of fighting before the resolution was carried and there must have been nice work by, shall we say, Mr. R. S. Lambert, before the pettifogging objections of that arch nuisance to the short film, Mr. W. R. Fuller, were defeated.

For, be it known that the Film Institute has among its Governors three representatives of the film trade and Mr. W. R. Fuller is the representative and Secretary of the exhibitors. The Moyne Committee has been pleased to agree that the encouragement of short films descriptive of Britain and the Empire is a matter of national importance. But not so our Mr. Fuller. He does not like our short films of Britain and the Empire and is never tired, in and out of council, of saying so. We are pretty sure that in this matter he totally misrepresents the feelings of his exhibitors, and no more so than at the Film Institute where a national view is of paramount importance.

Advancement Movement

IN AN EDITORIAL last month, we mentioned the possibility of an organisation being created to "sell reciprocity to Parliament and the public." The British Films Advancement Movement, sponsored as it is by public figures of repute, is a horse of another colour. It is, of course, under too high a responsibility to be associated with any direct lobbying of this sort.

In the complaint of the Film Council, that the circumstances attending the B.F.A.M.'s formation might have been more happily handled, we concur. The movement will no doubt regret them as much as we do.

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An analysis of the character of Alexander Korda

by Marcel Ermans

ALEXANDRE LE MAGNIFIQUE

A REMARKABLE attack on Alexander Korda was published recently in the French paper *Cinematographe:* remarkable because no picture of a well-known film figure has been quite so slashing before. "Alexandre le Magnifique" it is called and it sketches the whole career from its beginnings in Budapest University to the last difficulties of Denham. There is a good deal of, shall we say, French invective in the account, but a sufficient examination of character to be worth recording. For Korda has been important to the British cinema and his character may presumably have something to do with both its present and its future. The author of the *Cinematographe* article is Marcel Ermans.

Ermans does not forget to say some nice things about Korda. He allows that with his gifts of intelligence and energy he might quite well have been a newspaper proprietor, minister, financier, business man or explorer. He notes his victim's eloquence and charm. He describes him as a remarkable man of business and a faithful friend.

But the negatives are as thick as leaves in Vallambrosa, and all the leaves are distinctly jagged. He accuses Korda of a love of display which causes him to plan too spectacular production schedules. He accuses him of being a bad director and an incompetent producer.

Here is the relevant passage:

> "To be a good producer of films, it is not sufficient to rely on all the established people. To engage Laughton, Bergner, Dietrich, Clair, Feyder, Périnal, Meerson and other celebrated actors is easy enough. It is only necessary to be able to pay them the price they ask. But what is the good of it? The creative gift of artists is not to be bought, nor is the art of employing them.
>
> "It is very nice to construct a little Hollywood some miles from London, but what is one to shoot there? In all his films, Korda takes it upon himself to address a 'message' to the world, to the confusion of the Americans. What kind of message? To illustrate the ideology of Papa Wells and to produce, at the cost of millions, such films as *Shape of Things to Come*, *Man who could work Miracles*, *Don Juan*, it was not necessary to possess sumptuous studios. It would have been better to begin at the beginning. Failing imagination and talent it would have been better to form a troupe of directors, actors and technicians; to form them into a company and go ahead with the business of production. The most celebrated producers, as the public recognises, are those who know how to command without tyranny. Producing is an honourable profession; but in Europe those who are engaged in it are ashamed of it. European producers persecute and paralyse their staff, and leave their own work to get down on the floor and do the work of their assistants.
>
> "A chief knows how to get himself obeyed or he does not. If his lieutenant is no use, let him change him but let him not take his place. What would one think of a conductor who got down from his desk in order to take the place of the first violin? Who would beat time in his stead? Nobody? Then what would become of the concert? Another conductor? Then what would become of the first? Then what other conductor? 'My brother,' immediately replies Korda, 'or my old friend Lajos. Lajos? What Lajos? Lajos Biro.' "

It is clear from what follows that Ermans has no great opinion of either Zoltan Korda or Lajos Biro. The great failing of Korda, he maintains, is that he does not know how to surround himself and that he can only recognise established people. "Unable to recognise a new Lubitsch, a future Riskin, a budding Garbo, he takes counsel of his heart—for he has one—and turns to his relatives and friends." Nor does Ermans think a great deal of Mr. Korda's films. He outlines the history of the "butcher" Biro and the "confectioner" Korda (not to mention the "ineffable" Zoltan) from *Wedding Rehearsal* on. "If I were Korda," he says of *Wedding Rehearsal*, "I would get up in the night, steal the negative and quietly drop it in the Thames. All Korda's production faults appear undisguised in this ridiculous comedy." Ermans' analysis is at least amusing.

> "Central Europeans, particularly Hungarians, have considerable dramatic gifts: they are imaginative and confident, they do not fear failure; in fact they fear only one thing, namely that the public may not understand the plot. As opposed to our young authors, who cannot or will not construct their work properly, they build a structure so solid, so heavy, so cumbrous, that it dwarfs everything and crushes the life out of the play. If by ill luck the story is dull or stupid, the spectator finds himself faced with a useless mechanism which functions to no purpose—unbearably explicit. He feels like jumping up and shouting: 'Please, please! I understand the plot, I understand the plot. Have a heart! I've had enough. How do you expect to move people to laughter or tears if you spend all your time telling them the plot?'
>
> "I am not one," says Ermans sweetly, "who declares that *Henry VIII* is the only good production of Alexander Korda. I maintain that it is as bad as any other talking films directed or produced by him.

Historical tittletattle

Henry VIII is a collection of little stories and quasi-historical tittletattle. Korda has produced a film solemnly flat and cold, without rhythm, colour, or any bigness of conception in spite of the luxury of the sets and the costumes. On the ground that the English cinema has never been very brilliant some have seen in *Henry VIII* its most distinguished production. What impatience! Could they not wait till 1936, to see an inspired film in the English idiom: Robert Stevenson's strong and dignified *Tudor Rose* in which all the roles are not only well written but also well played. *Henry VIII* is no more than a demonstration of the talent of one man, the amazing Charles Laughton. Laughton is one of the principal comedians of our age, and the Shakespearian insolence of his interpretation saved Korda's film.

"Elisabeth Bergner did not succeed in saving *Catherine the Great*, which was twice as boring as *Henry VIII* and that largely because of Biro's scenario, added to the fact that none of the characters were interpreted by the right actor. Bergner's Catherine of Russia, a young girl; Fairbanks Junior as Pierre III; such are the enormous blunders in casting which delight the heart of one who wishes to pass himself off as a master of film production. Let us pass over *Don Juan*, *Things to Come* and *Rembrandt*, which are not more than demonstrations of the talent of a distinguished cameraman, Georges Périnal. Let us pass over *The Ghost Goes West*, whose actual success will not conceal for long its intrinsic poverty.

Sauce by "Butcher" Biro

"The *Red Robe*, the *Invincible Armada* will not be the last of the series. All periods will be passed in review, all the great figures of history will be dug up, skinned, filleted, broken and reset, unpicked and restitched, cooked, recooked and seasoned with *Wedding Rehearsal* sauce by butcher Biro and confectioner Korda. Let us wait to see these expensive gentlemen get busy with the private lives of Charles V, Louis XIV, Nero, Tamerlan, and Alexander the Great, completely dwarfed by Alexander the Magnificent, *'baronnet de Denhamm en Middlesex'*."

The final peroration:

"Well, it remains that Alexander Korda is an amiable gentleman who gives a livelihood to quite a number of worthy people. From the moral point of view he has a right to our esteem, and in the present state of society he represents a beneficent force. My natural indulgence causes me (not being myself a shareholder in London Films) to congratulate him in making money circulate. I have no regrets that this clever business man has not been attracted to some industry other than cinema—automobiles, for instance, cement, or even preserves. No, I will not even reproach him with being an incomplete artist and a creator without resource. Nor do I find it a fault that he will only work in a brilliant and expensive atmosphere. I am sorry because he is simply an ambitious man, like any other ambitious man, and because his ambition is so naïve. Ah, if Korda had been a *farceur*, everything would be different, and how welcome he would have been these days when there are so few amusing picturesque and 'different' people.

"Let us be content to thank Alexander Korda for having built near London in the middle of an immense park the most expensively equipped studio in Europe. In our time, as we all know, the spiritual is obscured by the intellectual, and the intellectual by the technical. One should not be surprised to see palaces thrown up to shelter gigantic machines placed at the service of shallow ideas and making ephemeral and artificial productions. But one day perhaps some genius will arise to make use of the marvellous instrument which lies at Denham.

"On that day a brilliant director, a poet, a creator, a lion like Stroheim, or a magician like Murnau, will reign upon one or more of the floors at Denham, and we shall wink at each other and say, 'Old Korda knew what he was doing after all'."

"I am not one who declares that *Henry VIII* is the only good production of Alexander Korda"

It is an amusing diatribe and, of course, partly true. It is true that his judgments of friendship have not always been judgments of inspired production and that brother Zoltan is not perhaps Britain's most promising director. It is true that many more celebrated names have gone into Denham than have emerged from it. It is true that the roles of producer, director (and of financier too) have got more mixed than was sometimes wise. But there is another interpretation, kinder to Korda and nearer the fact.

Korda has been ambitious and his ambition has at least been the means of giving scale for the first time to British production. He has made it think of big things and has pointed, like Cortez, to the horizon. The results have been sometimes disappointing and more often than not his films have been more expensive than they should have been. All this because Korda has not succeeded in making organisation keep in step with that ambition. He has, in truth, not known how to surround himself. It is a colossal weakness in a man otherwise brilliant which may well prove his undoing: all the more so in a business, like film, where so many factors are involved in production and so many important responsibilities must be delegated. Korda has had the overmastering desire to create a great film tradition round himself and to do it quickly, but the very quality of his ambition may be too individualistic to be content with that position of *first among equals* in a group of great abilities which is the key to efficient film production. Not otherwise does ambition in the corporate creative process which is cinema "fall upon the other."

In a bunch of dimwits

But this need not blind anyone to the fact that Korda's quality has been of historic importance in the development of the British cinema. He has made it think in larger terms. He has also, by his mistakes, made it think in more sensible terms. And to match Ermans' peroration, this can be said: He is still, to-day, the only fighting figure in the British cinema independent enough and tough enough in the cause of the British film to match swords with the American bosses like Eckman. One may not like the British film he stands for, and many wise critics do not. One may doubt the economics of his films and wonder at the economics of his studios, and many sensible observers do. One may sigh that his dreams and his schemes should so often be doomed to scrambled and tangled and second-rate execution, and embarrass themselves in their final cost. One may doubt, and many do, that he is the best leader for the British cinema; for he is on the one hand not a native, nor is he a born leader who knows how to keep strong people with him. But he is the only imaginative figure one sees in a bunch of dimwits and the only courageous figure in a bunch of lily-livers. And that will do for now.

The British Films Advancement Movement

by

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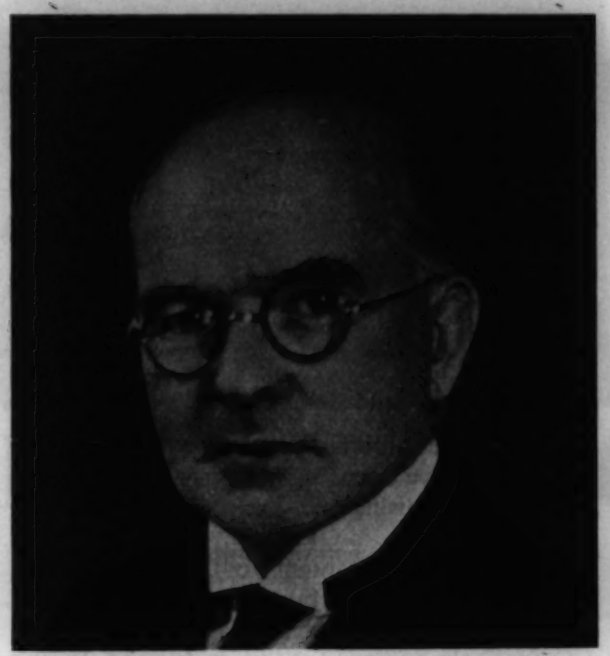

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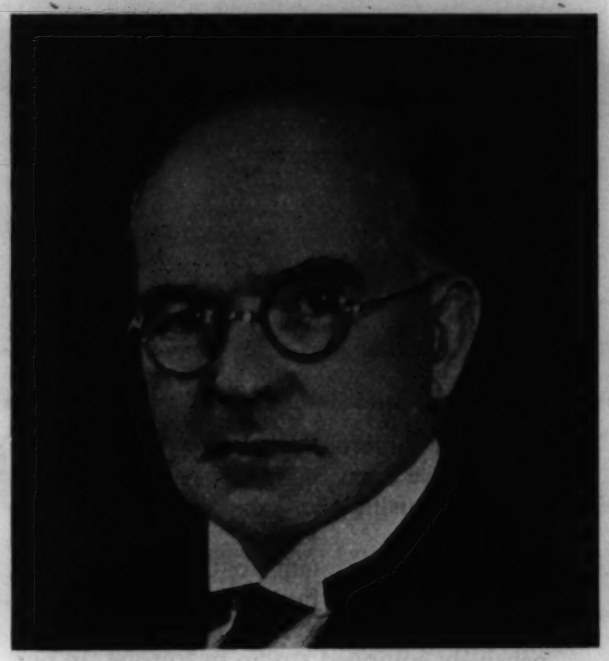

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PEOPLE OF THE STUDIOS

Denham

A short while before the Coronation, Anna Neagle, as Queen Victoria, was crowned at Denham in a vast replica of Westminster Abbey, complete in every detail and erected in less than a week. Miss Neagle took her seat in St. Edward's chair, around her extras in robes and uniforms banked almost to the roof of the huge stage. The ceremony included even the incident of the Archbishop placing the ring on the wrong finger of the Queen.

Herbert Wilcox, who directs and supervises this production of *Victoria the Great* for Imperator Film Productions, made his first film, *Chu Chin Chow*, fourteen years ago in Germany, entirely with British artists. He later worked at Elstree, forming the Herbert Wilcox Production Unit in 1935, since then making *Limelight*, *The Three Maxims* and *London Melody*, with Anna Neagle.

Herbert Wilcox directs "Victoria the Great"

A thick fog on the set of Battersea Bridge, a model of the giant power station looming in the background—*The Squeaker* in production. Georges Périnal, formerly chief photographer to René Clair, is cameraman under William K. Howard's direction.

* * *

Tentatively called *The Drum*, a story by A. E. W. Mason was started here last month. Sabu, Indian boy star of *Elephant Boy*, plays the lead, and Zoltan Korda directs. Production Manager Geoffrey Boothby has sailed for India, where atmosphere shots are being taken in technicolour on the North-West frontier. Screen play by Oliver Garrett, American scenarist responsible for *City Streets*, *The Story of Temple Drake* and *Night Flight*.

* * *

Basil Dean is making Galsworthy's *First and Last* for Alexander Korda. Production began on May 6th, with Vivien Leigh, Leslie Banks and Laurence Olivier.

* * *

Revolt in the Desert, Lawrence of Arabia film, announced by both London Films and New World, has been abandoned. Production was started by London Films over a year ago, with Walter Hudd in the leading part and Zoltan Korda directing, and later Harold Schuster restarted the picture for New World, with James Wong Howe at the camera. Silly rumours have been passed around that the decision to abandon the film was due to Government intervention. Money more likely.

* * *

Robert Donat returns to Denham for *South Riding*, which Victor Saville is producing. The company has prepared the way for the picture by taking atmosphere shots in Yorkshire.

Pinewood

On May 3rd, Jack Buchanan's own production company was launched, and shooting began on *Smash and Grab*. Leading lady to detective Buchanan is Elsie Randolph, who has partnered him on stage and screen for many years. Tim Whelan, who recently completed *Action for Slander* and *Farewell Again* (well reviewed), is directing. Five pictures are scheduled for the coming year by this company, to be made at Pinewood and released through G.F.D.

* * *

To those who saw some of her work on the stage, it was a pleasant surprise to hear that Adele Astaire, now Lady Cavendish, sister and once dancing partner to Fred Astaire, was making a professional come-back via films. It is reported that she will play female lead to Jack Buchanan in one of his next pictures.

* * *

Grosvenor Films have a musical production before the cameras, starring Arthur Tracy ("The Street Singer"). Harcourt Templeman is producing and Sinclair Hill directing.

Templeman joined the film industry in 1919 as associate producer for Stolls, and later for A.S.F.I. He was appointed production manager at British and Dominions in 1931, and four years later he became managing director of Grosvenor. Sinclair Hill had much pre-war experience in Continental films, since then writing, directing and producing many English pictures. He is now Chairman and Director of Grosvenor.

Ealing

Keep Fit, with George Formby, most quickly rising British star, took the floor last month, with Anthony Kimmins directing. Kimmins also wrote the dialogue with Austin Melford. Supporting cast includes Guy Middleton, Kay Walsh, Gus McNaughton and Denier Warren.

* * *

In spite of his activities at Denham, Basil Dean continues as producer here. Noted for his work in the theatre as well as on the screen, Mr. Dean founded Associated British Producers in 1929, and has since been on the directorate of A.T.P. Among the best known of his films are *Escape*, *Loyalties*, *The Constant Nymph*, *Autumn Crocus* (he was also responsible for the stage productions of the last two), *Lorna Doone*, *Whom the Gods Love* and *Queen of Hearts*. He recently produced the Dodie Smith (C. L. Anthony) play *Call it a Day*, which had a successful run at the Globe Theatre.

Jimmy Wong Howe, now in Hollywood shooting "Prisoner of Zenda"

Beaconsfield

Herbert Brenon, director of *Plunder in the Air* for Tudor Films, started his career as a call-boy in a West End theatre, working his way up as actor, author, and finally as a Hollywood director. He made the first version of *Beau Geste* (a colour version is to be made in Hollywood), and since his return to England in 1934 he has directed *Living Dangerously*, *Someone at the Door* and *The Dominant Sex*, all for B.I.P.

* * *

Jean Gillie, leading lady of *Plunder in the Air*, got her break in pictures when Jack Buchanan chose her for a half-minute appearance in *Brewster's Millions*. She has recently been second star to Elsie Randolph in both the screen and stage versions of *This'll Make You Whistle*.

Sound City

A film of the White Sea trawlers is being produced by Conway productions, a new company headed by H. Fraser Passmore. A unit has returned from a four weeks' trip to the White Sea on a Grimsby trawler, where they made a number of exterior sequences, and interior shooting has begun in the studio.

Elstree

Walter Mycroft, Director of Productions, graduated into the film industry through Fleet Street, where for seven years he was film critic of the *Evening Standard*. In 1927 he became scenario editor of British International Pictures (now Associated British Pictures), and five years later he was appointed to his present position. Pictures include *Blossom Time*, *Heart's Desire*, *Drake of England*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Ourselves Alone*, *Glamorous Nights* and *Let's Make a Night of It* (re-titled from *Radio Revue of* 1937).

Mayflower Films

Clemence Dane has been signed by Erich Pommer to script Daphne Du Maurier's novel *Jamaica Inn*, which is scheduled as the first production of this new Laughton-Pommer company. Charles Laughton himself will be the star of this smuggling yarn.

People of the Studios
(contd.)

AMERICA

United Artists

Most interesting of the United Artists' line-up is Selznick's International's *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Taken from the novel by Anthony Hope, and directed by John Cromwell, the cast includes Ronald Colman, Madeleine Carroll, Douglas Fairbanks jun., Mary Astor, Aubrey Smith, Raymond Massey and David Niven. Jimmy Wong Howe, cameraman of *The Thin Man*, *Viva Villa*, *Translantic* and *Fire Over England*, has replaced Bert Glennon. The change was made so that Glennon might serve as photographic observer on Selznick's next technicolour production, *Let Me Live*, to be directed by William A. Wellman ("Wings"), with Fredric March starring.

Walter Wanger's *Vogues of* 1938 is six days' shooting behind *Zenda*. Sam and Bella Spewack, joint authors of the Broadway success *Boy Meets Girl*, wrote the screen play, and Irving Cummings directs. Warner Baxter, Joan Bennett, Francis Langford, Mischa Auer and Alan Mowbray are in the cast. Charles Boyer, recently seen in *History is Made at Night*, is to become a producer as well as an actor under the terms of a contract he has signed with Wanger. His first production will probably be *The Man with Twelve Models*.

Gene Towne and Graham Baker, authors of *History is Made at Night*, have completed their adaption of *Ali Baba Goes to Town*, Eddie Cantor's first for 20th Century-Fox, and return to Wanger to script *Stand-in* for Leslie Howard.

Goldwyn has *Stella Dallas* before the cameras, for United Artists release, with Barbara Stanwyck, John Boles, Anne Shirley and Alan Hale. King Vidor directs. In 1925, Douglas Fairbanks jun. played his first important part in the silent version of *Dallas*. In the present production, getting his first big break, is another son of a famous father, Tim Holt, son of Jack Holt—and in the Fairbank's role.

Goldwyn has signed on Honolulu's Shirley Temple, *Kuulei Declercq*, an eight-year-old entertainer. We are told that since infancy she has sung, Hula'ed, played the ukelele and is one of Honolulu's best known artists. Another to join Goldwyn is Virginia Verrill, whose voice was dubbed for Jean Harlow's in a singing sequence some years ago. She is to be built up as "the singing Myrna Loy," and will have the lead in *The Goldwyn Follies*, after being loaned to Wanger for *Vogues of* 1938.

Warner Bros.

Mervyn LeRoy is making another picture for Warners. The title is *The Deep South*, the story is by Ward Greene (from a novel), and the stars are Claude Rains, Otto Kruger and Gloria Dickson. William Dieterle's *Emile Zola* nears completion, and judging by studio reports it gives Paul Muni a fair chance of living up to his reputation, consolidated with *Pasteur* and *The Good Earth*. The story is based on the life of *Zola*, from his book *I Accuse*. Cast also includes Bonita Granville, Joseph Schildkraut and Gale Sonergaard.

Robert Montgomery and Marion Davies meet for the first time in *Ever Since Eve*, Cosmopolitan production being made for Warners with Lloyd Bacon directing. Original story by Gene Baker and Margaret Lee.

James Whale, who has just finished *The Road Back* for Universal, goes to Warners to direct Brian Aherne in *The Great Garrick* for Mervyn LeRoy.

Paramount

High Wide and Handsome, Irene Dunne picture directed by Rouben Mamoulian, and Wesley Ruggles' *I Met Him in Paris* (Claudette Colbert), are in the cutting room. *Angel*, with Marlene Dietrich, Herbert Marshall, Ernest Cossart, Edward Everett Horton and Herbert Mundin, progresses under Ernst Lubitsch. Charles Lang is doing the camerawork.

Other pictures in production include *The Last Train from Madrid*—a picture of the Spanish revolution, action of which is intercut with actual Madrid battle shots, taken by cameramen at present in Spain—and *Easy Living*, a Jean Arthur-Edward Arnold film.

Oscar Homolka, who played in *Rhodes of Africa* and Hitchcock's *Sabotage*, starts in Hollywood in the Lucien Hubbard technicolor picture *Ebbtide*, from the novel by Robert Louis Stevenson.

Two more stars to sign with Paramount are Anna May Wong and Fredric March. Miss Wong's first production for the company is tentatively set for September, but no title is yet announced. March is scheduled to play the part of a pirate-patriot in *The Buccaneer*, to be made by Cecil B. DeMille. Franciska Gaal, Hungarian actress, plays opposite.

Despite the fact that permission has been granted to Universal for Deanna Durbin to sing excerpts from *Carmen* in a forthcoming film, Paramount is going ahead with its plans to film the opera in full, with Howard Eastbrook producing.

M.G.M.

There is still doubt as to when Norma Shearer will return to work, but Hunt Stromberg has the cameras ready to turn on *Marie Antoinette*, first picture assigned to Miss Shearer since the death of her husband, Irving Thalberg. Claudine West has been working on the script. Second Shearer picture will probably be *Pride and Prejudice*.

Kipling having proved himself good box-office in the form of *Elephant Boy* and *Captains Courageous*, M.G.M. have set Talbot Jennings working on the script of *Kim*, for Freddie Bartholomew. Louis Leighton will produce.

George Seitz is directing the Bayard Veiller mystery play *The Thirteenth Chair*, in which Madge Evans, Dame May Whitty, Elissa Landi and Lewis Stone head the cast of only twenty-five.

Hackett and Goodrich, together with Stromberg (now producing *The Firefly*), are preparing a second sequel to *The Thin Man*, to be titled *The Thin Man Returns*. William Powell, Myrna Loy, and rough-haired terrier Asta are the stars, as before.

Frank Borzage (his latest picture: *History is Made at Night*), directs *Three Rooms in Heaven*, with Joan Crawford and Spencer Tracy starring. It is Borzage's first job with this company. Joseph Mankiewicz will produce the picture.

Now that London Films and New World have dropped their proposed Lawrence of Arabia picture, Hollywood intends to take on the job. M.G.M. have registered the title *With Lawrence of Arabia* at the Hays Office—though it is understood that Universal had previously registered the title *Lawrence in Arabia*.

And Others . . .

Mortimer Offner is scripting a picture based on the lives of the late Vernon and Irene Castle, famous dancing pair. Fred Astaire will play Vernon—though Ginger Rogers is not cast as Irene. Pandro S. Berman produces for Radio.

Alongside the news that Norma Shearer is making a picture of *Marie Antoinette*, comes word that Universal have *Queen at Fourteen* in the scripting stage. Deanna Durbin takes the name part.

Columbia has three "tough guy" pictures on the floor. Phil Rosen directs Jack Holt in *Blazing Glory*, Harry Lachman directs Richard Dix in *Once a Hero* (with Fay Wray) and Hamilton MacFadden directs Ralph Bellamy in *With Kind Regards*.

Japan

Tokyo Talking Pictures Corporation has completed a modern studio in Detagaya. No reports of current or forthcoming productions are yet to hand.

China

Plans are afoot in China to expand the film industry on Hollywood lines, and arrangements are being made whereby young Chinese may be sent to America to study studio technique. The Government lends its moral, though not its monetary, support. T. J. Holt, head of a theatre chain operating in Shanghai and Nanking, is paying an advance visit to California to test the ground and bring home ideas for studio reorganisation. Sixty to seventy films a year have lately been produced in China, mainly silent—but at the moment there are only two hundred theatres to serve a population of 400,000,000.

Chinese technicians will go to Hollywood to study new methods

People of the Studios (contd.)

CONTINENTAL

Austria

Ski-ing and other Austrian sports will figure in a fashion film which a large Austrian industrial society has sponsored for showing at the Paris World Exhibition. More than 150 actors and actresses, sports stars and mannequins, are to take part.

Palestine

Cinematographic illustrations of Bible stories for children are being produced here by Aiden Crawley, ex-newspaperman and son of the Dean of Windsor, who has with him full sound equipment. The party remains in Palestine for nine months, during which time they will tour the whole country. Films will be distributed by School Films of London.

France

Emile Pathé, president of Pathé Marconi Co., who with his brother Charles and two other Frenchmen started Pathé Frères in 1896, died recently in Pau. Responsible for the development of the first French projection machines, French feature pictures and the first newsreel, he set up an American branch in 1908 and began operations in Jersey, making such early serials as *The Perils of Pauline*, as well as newsreels of local events.

Julien Duvivier, director of *The Golem* and *Pépé le Moko* which were running simultaneously in London, is making *Un Carnet de Bal* ("A Ticket to the Ball"). Cast includes Harry Baur, Fernandel and Françoise Rosay (of *Kermesse Héroïque*). Several writers, including Bernard Zimmer and Jean Sarment, have been working on the dialogue. Exteriors will be shot in the Italian Lake District.

Ferdinand Earle, old-timer of Hollywood, is now in Paris producing coloured fantasy films after the style of Len Lye. Earle says of his first film *Amar:* "It is what music is to the ear, and combined with music it will convey both by the ear and eyes simultaneously, a multiple sensation quite novel and very curious." Invention is patented, and Earle heads the company promoting production.

Erich von Stroheim plays the lead in *La Grande Illusion*, war film written by Jean Renoir and Charles Spaak, directed by Renoir. Jean Gabin, now known in England for his acting in *Pépé le Moko*, is also in the cast, and Joseph Kosma wrote the music.

Stroheim, who is fifty-two this year, was born in Vienna, and began his career as an army officer and newspaper man in Austria, later becoming a magazine writer in the U.S.A. He has written a number of stage plays, and directed as well as acted in films—in 1926 he was chosen as one of the best ten directors of the year.

Italy

Bavaria Films, of Germany, have a unit in Italy making exteriors for *His Majesty's Singer*, to star Italy's number one tenor, Benjamino Gigli. Gigli has played in a number of German pictures, and he seems to be more popular in Germany than in his native country.

Tobis also has a company in Pompeii working on a new Emil Jannings picture.

GOING, GOING, GONE

Exit D. W. Griffith, Inc.

About thirty people attended the D. W. Griffith, Inc., receivership sale held in New York City in April.

The company was formed in 1920 by giving D. W. Griffith all the common stock in exchange for his studio and all other film assets. Class A. stock was sold to the public and at the present time there are about 5,000 stockholders. Griffith was signed as a director for ten years. During the first five years the company took in over $8,000,000.* This money had evaporated at the end of that time due to many causes, not however, it was agreed, because of the dishonesty of anyone.

Way Down East and *Orphans of the Storm* made large profits—the former was one of the biggest money-makers of all time. But *America* and *Isn't Life Wonderful*, made at the end of the period, cost a great deal and were not very profitable.

In 1925, Griffith was farmed out to Paramount, and later to United Artists, D. W. Griffith, Inc., receiving over $1,000,000 in return for his services.

This money was invested before the crash in stocks—American Can, Continental Can and Standard Oil of California.

Griffith later put in a claim for $795,000 as salary due to him. This was settled by giving him 500 shares of United Artists—the shares at that time being worth about $60,000 or $70,000.

The company decided in 1931 to produce a picture in order to make some money. $200,000 was allotted for it. *The Struggle* (a discussion of the prohibition question) was made in a small independent studio in the Bronx which had formerly been the Edison plant. The picture was a dismal failure due to censorship cuts, faulty recording and other difficulties, and returned only $50,000. In October, 1935, the company went into receivership.

The sale offered the studio property at Mamaroneck, New York, the rights to twenty-one pictures, and the office furniture. The studio property consists of a 29½ acre peninsula jutting into Long Island Sound off Orienta Point at Mamaroneck. The studio and other buildings were torn down about ten years ago.

The pictures included the famous war-film, *Hearts of the World*, *Isn't Life Wonderful* (made partly in Germany), two Dorothy Gish comedies *Nobody Home* and *I'll Get Him Yet*, the ill-fated *Struggle* and others, as well as unproduced stories and scenarios. Also included were the musical scores of the films.

Woodson R. Oglesby, attorney representing D. W. Griffith, was the successful bidder for the films and the property, Griffith wishing to wind up the receivership. He offered $500 for the films, subject to storage charges of $1,783. (A Mr. Goldstein offered $500 for one picture, *The Struggle*, but all were to be sold in a group.) Oglesby offered $5,000 cash for the property at Mamaroneck, said to be worth about $170,000, which is subject to mortgages and tax liens totaling more than $150,000, including a note of $29,000 held by D. W. Griffith against the property, which Albert D. Levin (representing John W. Manning, the creditor in whose behalf the receivership suit was filled) felt should revert to the stockholders rather than to Griffith personally.

An outsider bid $100 for the furniture, plus $125 storage charges.

Mr. Levin raised objections to the sale, claiming that the court should fix a minimum figure for each item and that he did not know the exact values and other data. The court objected to the sale being postponed and directed that it proceed, Levin having had almost two years to investigate. Levin also claimed that originally 1,000 shares of United Artists stock had been transferred, either to Griffith, Inc., or to D. W. Griffith. The judge ruled that Levin could petition the court for an order to have the subject of the disposal of the 500 shares reopened at a later date.

And so D. W. Griffith, Inc. fades out.

* During his 23-year career, Griffith spent $20,000,000 on some 400 pictures which earned $60,000,000, mostly for others.

Theodore Huff

Political Forum

Banning by Germany's film censors of a film entitled *The Land We Love* has won considerable attention from the daily press. The film was made by Tobis and directed by non-Aryan Reinhold Schuenzel, a director considered so able by Hitler that he was allowed the privilege of working in German studios.

Schuenzel apparently abused this privilege by inserting scenes in the film which were interpreted as satire on the Nazi government. The report of the censorship committee's reaction was such that Schuenzel on hearing it, fled the country. He has since accepted an offer from Hollywood.

In Germany scripts of all films must be submitted to the authorities and the script of *The Land We Love* was sufficiently innocuous to be passed. The finished film, however, appeared before the censorship board with subtle twists and additional dialogue. One piece which a Chief of Police is given to say runs:

"In this country we do not read books. We swim, we wrestle, we fence, we lift weights, but we do not allow our muscles to be softened by intellectualism."

Dr. Goebbels is reported to have seen the film and to have exhibited strong feelings on the treatment. He is well-known for his dislike of "aliens who ridicule Germany."

* * *

A series of films describing the industries and culture of the various republics of the U.S.S.R. has been planned. The various sections of the Soviet film industry all over the country will contribute towards it. The films will be exhibited in schools and at lectures.

The northern sea route and the work of Soviet stations in the Arctic will be treated in one of the films. Others to be made in Central Asia will describe the conquest of the Kara-Kum desert. Six expeditions are planned for the near future and production will begin immediately.

Hollywood Learned from the Crash; Will England?

DR. MARTIN FREUDENTHAL, *the writer of this article, formerly Counsellor of Legation at the German Foreign Office, some years ago was sent to New York and Hollywood on a special mission which enabled him to study thoroughly the American and international film situation.*

FIVE years ago I was in Hollywood on behalf of the German Government. At that time the American film industry was in the grip of a serious depression. A year's visit, during which I had opportunities of talking to all sorts of film people, from extras and third-assistants to Chaplin, Thalberg and Laemmle, gave me ample opportunity of studying Hollywood's film slump and how it was tackled. What I saw there comes vividly to mind at the present time when the British film industry in turn is fighting its own difficulties.

The British slump has come upon us in a boom period of general trade, unheralded by fore-warnings. Hollywood's slump was largely a symptom of a general trade-depression. This difference in natural trade conditions is important enough, but at the same time a study of the Hollywood slump reveals many significant resemblances to the present position of the industry in this country. Merely to recall the courage and endurance of the Americans in fighting their way back to prosperity ought to inspire the British with similar qualities; especially if they reflect that the Americans won through.

Outspending—a Triumph

They found, when they came to set their house in order, that actual production was costing far too much. There were many reasons for this—overspending and over-capitalisation, a relic of the earlier boom-period which attracted so much investment. Competition between rival companies played its part. Production costs were further swollen by that sort of nepotism, not unknown in British studios, which gives important salaries to unimportant relatives of the boss. In short, all executives who were engaged in making the films, and many who were not, were taking a share of the "cut" before the films had left the studios. Their share is still big, but not so big.

For in cutting down costs, the Americans did not go very far. Even in the worst years of the slump, films were costing £40,000 on the average, and some were made which cost over £100,000, a figure not far short of the biggest sums spent here during the boom. When we recall that Hecht and MacArthur made *Crime Without Passion* with a miserable little sum which they begged from Paramount, and when we reflect that many people, including Robert Flaherty, tell us quite soberly that there is no technical reason why first-class films should not be made nowadays in people's lobbies and sitting-rooms, we see that economy could have been carried much further without impairing quality. But we may remind ourselves that production chiefs could scarcely be expected to give the game away by making any very spectacular reduction in their own expenditure, and that in any case economy, especially in America, will always be accompanied by a fear of losing "face."

Anyhow, the American film people did cut their costs pretty considerably. But at the same time they set themselves to improve quality. They saw quite clearly that films would have to be better, more individual, more exciting, more appealing, more amusing, generally "more so." They did their best to break themselves of the sterilising habit of repeating previous successes and borrowing themes, titles and backgrounds from earlier films. They went out after new types of settings for the old stories the public loves so well, tightened up and speeded up action and dialogue, and generally produced a better article.

The exhibition system required strict rationalisation. The big corporations owned chains of theatres, hundreds and even thousands in one chain, and found that to feed them they had to make more films than the sadly depleted audiences of a slump period could pay for. They weeded out the worst of the theatres by closing them down to cut their losses, and further lessened their distribution responsibilities by giving many of the better ones back to the local owners from whom they had bought them in the first place. This process of retrenchment and devolution was the logical reverse of the expansion which had previously taken place. It transferred their distribution worries to local interests, which presumably were glad to take theatres back at prices lower than they had sold them for, and looked forward to the recovery which has since, in great measure, rewarded them.

America weathered her storm

Thus Hollywood and New York fought against the slump during 1932 and 1933, to such effect that by 1936 all the bigger American corporations were in a sound financial position, and even those which had been hardest hit—Paramount and R.K.O.—were firmly on their feet. General trade recovery helped, of course, but the film people can congratulate themselves on their courage and confidence and on the firm measures that brought them through the storm.

So let our British chiefs take heart. Let them draw what analogies they can, between the position in America five years ago and the position in Britain to-day. Let them take what measures they think fit to reform their finances. But in looking forward, let them remember their past achievements in film-making. The Americans could always produce good pictures, but cannot England say the same thing? Critics of British films are too often unfair—they compare Hollywood's best with Britain's worst, forgetting that we produce a lot of good stuff, and Hollywood a lot of trash. Let us look at Britain's best, and compare it with Hollywood's.

For them, we can name *Modern Times*, *Cavalcade*, *Louis Pasteur*, *Green Pastures;* many others suggest themselves, films with a great and wise appeal to general human sentiment, as successful with simple audiences as with the most sophisticated; indeed, carefully calculated to have this broad appeal, as Thalberg explained to me when I discussed the matter with him. For England, we can name *Henry VIII*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *The 39 Steps*, *Evergreen*, *The Good Companions*, *Friday the Thirteenth*, *The Ghost Goes West*, *Rembrandt*, *Things to Come*, *Fire Over England*, *Farewell Again*, *The Great Barrier*. Let us remember the immense success here and in America of Jessie Matthew's light-winged, happy art. Let us remember Laughton's triumphs, let us not forget even Will Hay's school and Gracie Field's personality, both unique in the world.

The realist group, in any review which takes account of potentialities, would be mentioned first. Who knows what influence they are to exert on the future of film?

In comparing British with American films we must bear two things in mind. The first is America's thirty years' start. Thirty years of film history is probably equivalent to something like 3,000 years of general history. The other thing is America's huge home market, and the still greater world-market she built up in her years of expansion. Starting thirty years late, when the British market was already flooded with American films, the British film industry has done wonders in producing films comparable with America's best. So I should think that in spite of present storms we may forecast good weather for British films.

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Continuing the policy of bringing to its readers articles from the world's most famous journals, W.F.N. has pleasure in publishing this article on the American newsreel. While not associating itself with many of the observations contained in the article, W.F.N. publishes it as a first-rate factual survey of the newsreel story, written with that encyclopaedic skill which is to-day so brilliant a feature of American journalism. The original article appeared in a recent issue of Scribner's, New York, to whom we are indebted.

by
Thomas Sugrue

BRINGING THE WORLD

THE newsreels have used the only new art form which has appeared in the world for several ages in a practical way. They have accepted the motion-picture camera as an eliminator of space, as a means of teleportation, whereby there is catapulted to any designated place any part or portion of the earth and the events transpiring thereon. They have set before the cinema audiences of the world the world itself—realistic, brutally curt, uncomfortably detailed. Through them the movie audiences of the world have been released from a dream world, a captivity of the eye as torturesome to the curious as was the chained agony of Prometheus.

The effect of this magical transportation of earth and flesh has been, and is, incalculable. The generation which has grown up with automobiles, radios, and airplanes has also grown up with newsreels. This generation, which is accustomed to travel over land at sixty miles an hour and through the air at two hundred miles an hour, and which accepts as a commonplace the voice of a man speaking to it from a distance of a thousand miles, has not considered as remarkable the fact that it can see with its own eyes, while sitting in its neighbourhood theatre, events that transpired in the far places of the world only a few days before. This practical clairvoyance in time and space, with which mystics have wrestled for thousands of years, is not considered a phenomenon by Americans.

Foreigners think differently. In London there are twenty newsreel theatres—cinema houses devoted exclusively to the exhibition of pictorial news. In Paris there are ten, and every small European city has at least one. In the whole of the United States there are six: three in New York, one in Newark, one in Philadelphia, and one at North Station in Boston. The best customers of these half-dozen pioneers are foreigners, especially Japanese and Chinese. The Oriental thrills when a faraway place or a great man is brought before him.

The American is apathetic; it is for him that the newsreels have injected comedy, novelties, features, and the expert filming of sports events. History either bores or frightens him. He prefers the feature picture, which pacifies him with illusions of beauty and provides him with a vicarious outlet for his appetites and his dreams of beauty and grandeur. The astounding circulation figures of the newsreels are therefore misleading. They are not the result of voluntary attention; you get the newsreels whether you like it or not, while you are waiting for the stage show or the feature. Even so, their effect has been great, incalculably great.

The makers of newsreels have been able to exist and grow healthy on narcissism. Exhibitors have never cared a tinker's dam about the reels, and they argued against their inception in 1910, on the basis that the news would be too old by the time they got it to their screens. For a while the reels were given away, and they persisted only because something had to be shown to fill the gap between showings of the feature. Figuratively, an emancipation of the mind was rammed down the throats of Americans. Now they know what the world looks like beyond the horizon, and how Mussolini and Hitler and Gandhi, and the Duke of Windsor walk, talk, swim, laugh, and squint. History, because of the newsreels, can never again be what it had been since Herodotus—a romanticised glorification of commonplaces. The past cannot be more glorious or heroic than the present. The newsreel record lies in its morgue, ready to leap out and reveal the past as something as dull, ordinary, and prosaic as the things of the present. Had Napoleon and John L. Sullivan been exposed to the newsreel they would never have become the demigods of militarism and pugilism. Napoleon would be preserved for visual inspection as a megalomaniacal punk, and the Boston Strong Boy would be a ridiculously moustached blacksmith turned bludgeoner of humans. When Pathé released its twenty-fifth anniversary reel in 1935, Wilson, Taft, the first Roosevelt, and a host of other figures who are heading toward Olympus in the public mind were suddenly exposed as ordinary men in rather silly-looking clothes. The grinning newsreel cameraman, hunting ridiculous angles with savage glee, kills gods of the future with his picture gun.

In recent years the great men of the world—proving their greatness—have recognised this danger, and are more circumspect and restrained before the camera. They dare not refuse to be filmed, so they make the best of it by co-operating with the cameraman and acting for him. At the last inauguration, President Roosevelt literally toed a chalk line for the boys, and stayed within a small square marked out for him by the cameramen, who were on a tower fifty feet away with their machines focused on the square. The tower cost the newsreels $2,000 to construct. In return for co-operation the great men are spared the cameraman's satire, but the camera itself is a satirist. Its realism is subtle and cruel. It can be tipped to a flattering angle, but its lens will not delete a single detail.

Should the newsreels suddenly announce that, since they have never been appreciated and do not make money and are given away as premiums with Garbo and Gable and Crawford, they have

decided to give up the ghost and retire, there would probably be quite a squawk. There has been a growing appreciation of them on the part of intelligent people, especially since the advent of sound, and the companies themselves have laboured to make reels that grow less tiresome and repetitious, more interesting and informative, week by week. And the average American, pampered almost to extinction, would be inclined to cry a little, much as he would weep if his fresh grapefruit in midwinter were taken away from him.

But the newsreels are not apt to make any such announcement. Their makers are joyous in their creation, and they represent a prodigious investment. They are still the ill-used stepchildren of Hollywood's household, distributed as lollipops along with the supersmash productions of their owners, but they comprise an amazing and ingenious system of world news coverage which dwarfs everything of its kind except the great press associations. They represent an investment in camera and sound equipment which cannot be estimated; they consume film as fire consumes tinder; they envelop the lives of more than 2,000 photographers from Bangor to Benares. They examine a quarter of a million feet of film negative a week; and they work like madmen to present in 10,000 feet a panorama of civilisation's epic attempt to tie itself into an inextricable knot.

TO THE WORLD

The newsreel history is consistent with its role of unappreciated stepchild of the movies. It had a rocky start. Its first adventure was almost its last, and it went out to conquer the world with faith alone. There was little blessing from the multitude, and no cheers.

In 1906 a short, stocky young man named Leon Franconi stood among the ruins of San Francisco and contemplated the effacement of his family's home and fortune, both done in by the great fire. He decided to go south in search of a better fate, and travelled to Los Angeles, where he joined the firm of Pathé Frères, French motion-picture producers, who had established a branch firm in Hollywood. Young Franconi became confidential interpreter for Charles Pathé, one of the brothers, and worked as general practitioner in the business and executive offices of the company. In 1909, inspired by the sight of a film of Taft's inauguration, he suggested to his employer that a magazine of the screen be founded by the company, to record and present news events to the audiences. Charles Pathé thought it over, went to Paris, and tried it out on the French; and in 1910, eight months later, cabled Franconi to go ahead in America.

He made an effort to get news when he could, and when fire broke out in Galveston, Texas, he hired a locomotive and caboose in order to send a cameraman from New Orleans in time to get the conflagration at its height. It cost him $500, but the cameramen got enough negative to supply all the European offices of Pathé, and the expenditure was condoned. One of his cameramen happened to be in a hotel in St. Augustine, Florida, when the fire of 1912 broke out there, and that made a good picture. Franconi sent cameramen to cover the strike in Colorado, at Trinidad, and a complete riot was photographed. That was the first instance of heroism on the part of cameramen. One of them was nearly killed.

Franconi had the field to himself up until 1912, when competition sprang up in the shape of Hearst and Universal. Paramount started its reel in 1916, and Fox came in right after the Armistice. These are the Big Five of this day, which finds Franconi living in White Plains, New York, in semi-retirement, quite pleased with what happened to his idea.

The newsreel developed slowly during the silent days, getting better as cameras improved and building up a system of coverage which gradually blanketed the world. The legend of the daring cameraman arose, and parades and conventions were gradually eliminated as more spot news was covered. There were still too many battleship parades and Bavarian peasant dances to suit the discriminating, but there was nothing much that could be done about it. To this day battleships make beautiful pictures, and the newsreel depends on beautiful pictures for its success. Thrilling as divorces and murders are, they are hopeless pictorially. To the newsreels it is a matter of no picture, no story.

Sound changed the newsreels as much as it changed feature pictures, and, strangely enough, the newsreels were chosen by destiny to prove the efficacy of the "talkies." The first sound feature film, *The Jazz Singer*, was a success, but after that the feature pictures in sound were pretty bad, and the new device looked like a failure. Then, suddenly, Fox came out with a newsreel that not only had sound, but had it *on the film*, rather than on records. This was a gadget developed by Courtland Smith, now president of Pathé News. Pretty soon the Fox reel was in such demand that four different editions of it—reels, A, B, C, and D—were being produced a week. The reel did a hundred-thousand-dollar-a-week business, the first, last, and only time a newsreel ever climbed into such a financial bracket, and Smith found himself making speeches to the sceptical in favour of sound film. In the flush of success he founded the first newsreel theatre, the Embassy, in New York.

The Fox-Case system of film recording was going like a house afire, but the Fox Company got into a magnificent mess; William Fox lost out in his fight for control, and Smith went to Pathé. The Fox Reel, christened the Fox Movietone News, went on to become the largest in organisation and extent. It has a European Movietone News, a British Movietone News, and separate reels for every country, including Australia and New Zealand. Only Russia is excepted. The foreign extension was plotted and founded by Truman Talley, now general manager and producer of the American reel. Talley has stamped his personality on the Fox reel much as Smith has reflected himself in the Pathé reel.

Movietone is distinguished from its competitors by its high degree of departmentalisation; every subject has a special commentator and a name for the department. Pathé puts a separate title on sports, but believes with the others that news is haphazard and that a reel must be kept open for spot news, which seldom lends itself to categories. Mike Clofine, the Hearst reel boss, makes a fetish of this freedom, as does Paramount. The latter goes farther, refusing to let a personality get into the make-up of the reel. It uses a board of three editors: A. J. Richard, editor; William P. Montague, assignment editor; William Park, make-up editor. It doesn't identify its commentators, using six or eight and choosing a voice to fit the story.

Universal, dubbed "The Five-Cent Weekly" by the other reels because it has a smaller staff and only four sound outfits, can afford to smirk at such badinage. It decided not to invest in expensive sound equipment in the early days when an outfit weighed 1,400 pounds and the amplifier was attached to a truck. Instead, it hired a commentator, Graham McNamee, and used his voice with music and manufactured sound. This was forethought to the point of prophecy, for natural sound wore off as a novelty and the other reels turned to commentators, music, and finally, as now, a mixture of all three. Universal gets the palm for pioneering. It is run efficiently by Charles Ford, who once founded a local reel for the Chicago *Daily News*. With less money Ford often gets better pictures than his competitors, though

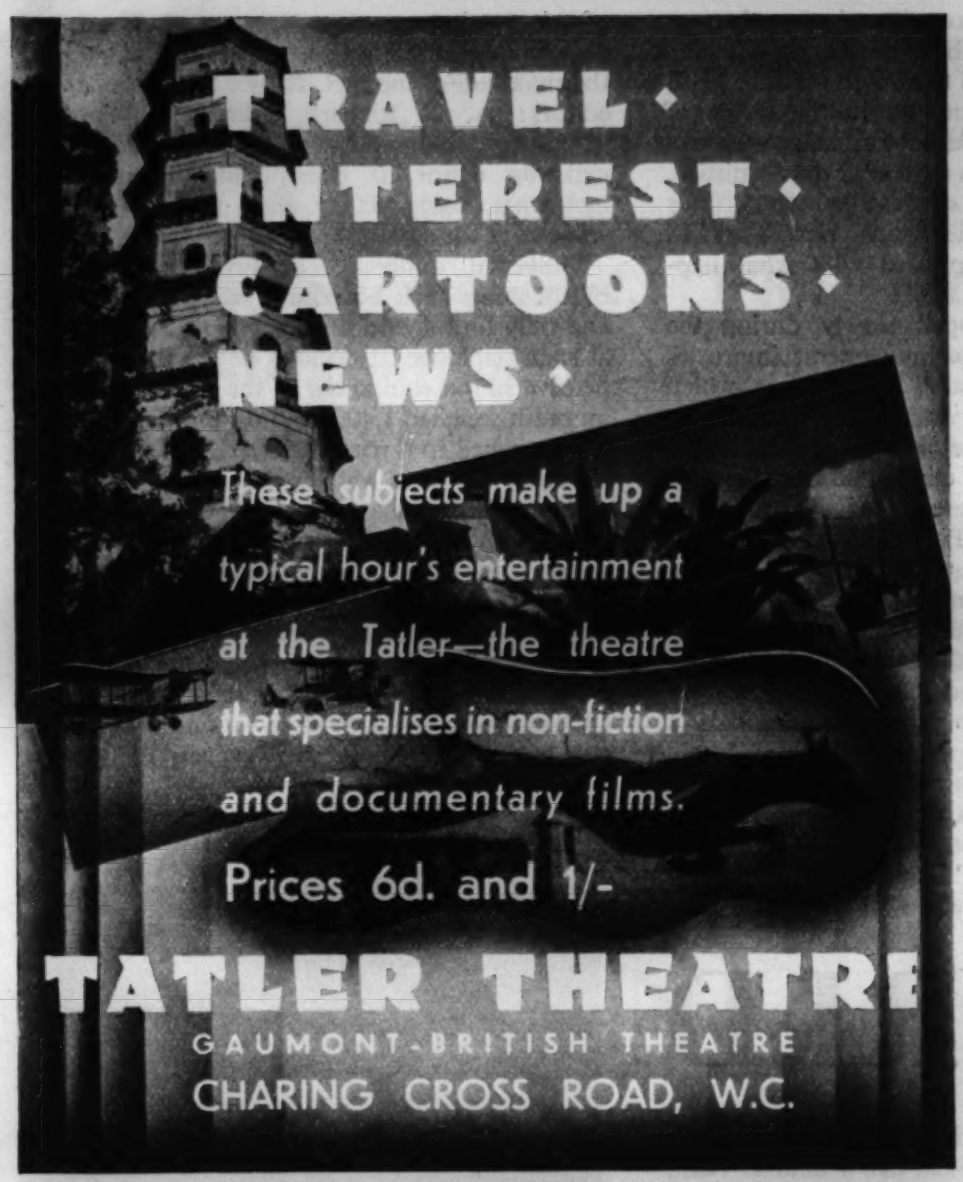
he cannot cope with such scoops as Pathé's exclusive contract with the Dionne Quintuplets, or the blanket coverage of Movietone.

The March of Time, which is a magazine of the screen, costs an exhibitor more than a newsreel, though it isn't the smash hit that was predicted. It has a little trouble now and then with reenactments of news. Some local Nazis raised a rumpus about a German sequence, and people often refuse either to act themselves or to sanction a double. The reel is careful not to be libellous, and that often detracts from its sting.

Sound slowed up the reels for a while because the novelty of natural noises and a commentator's voice was played up. Fewer stories were used in a reel, in order that the audience could hear more about each. As the novelty wore off, things were speeded up, and nowadays an average reel of ten minutes' duration contains between nine and thirteen subjects, with music, natural sound, and the comment artistically mixed, each coming out for a somersault at the proper time. The commentators have dwindled in importance. They do not write what they say, anyhow, and a suitable voice is all that is needed. In the newsreel offices they are known as "talk-strippers," which indicates the social flop they have taken. There has been a financial flop along with it; they no longer receive fabulous salaries.

The newsreels operate exactly like newspapers, with a news desk and an editor who assigns stories. Each company has a staff of cameramen, backed up by an international army of freelances

(*Continued on page* 17)



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—usually local photographers with their own cameras. There are only about five hundred staff men, averaging one hundred for each company —Fox a little more, Universal less. The freelances are paid for footage.

Equipment has been reduced in size, until now it weighs, camera and sound together, only 150 pounds, with most of the weight in the tripod on which the camera rests. The technicians hope to reduce the whole thing to a pack which one man can carry, but they dare not as yet lighten the tripod, for the success of a picture depends on its rigidity, and a light tripod would probably do more harm than good. Each man has a small automatic camera for close work, and telescopic lenses are in general use, making it possible to get close-ups.

The editors live in daily horror of scratches on the film, the result of either a dirty "gate" on the camera or faulty work in developing. Unlike a newspaper, which can rewrite a story, the newsreel can do nothing with a bad film. They don't get much of it, for the cameramen are highly skilled, but they could do with some more imagination on the part of cameramen, because new angles are constantly necessary. It may be a brand-new fire or flood, but it is apt to look just like the last one, and the eyes remember scenes better than the mind remembers facts. Audiences yawn, and remember last year's conflagration, which looked the same. Editors would like to see young college men with intelligence and imagination get into the newsreel cameramen's field, but somehow, like the church, it doesn't attract them nowadays.

The cameramen send all of their negatives to the central offices—all of which are in New York —by plane whenever possible. (The newsreels are the best customers of the airways, using planes to send negative, to distribute prints and to take pictures.) There the film is examined, projected, cut, and pasted together. The natural sound is already on it, and this is mixed with music wherever music is desired. Meanwhile, the editors get to work on the comment, and when this is ready the talk-stripper goes into a projection room and does his work. He sits at a table with a microphone and script, while the film is projected before him. His voice is piped to a mixing machine, where it joins the other sounds, which are toned down when he is speaking. Meanwhile, titles come from the print shop, and such artistic things as dissolves, wipeouts and double exposures are added—whenever the editor thinks necessary.

All of this is done in a single day, a day often lasting from noon until eight or nine o'clock the next morning. All reels make up on Monday and Wednesday, to catch the changes in programme at theatres all over the country, and the prints are shipped by aeroplane and fast trains. The prints, incidentally, are costly, and were it not necessary to make so many—four or five hundred, one for each of the reels' first-run houses—the reels would make money.

All the reels except Universal are distributed through their parent companies to the theatre chains controlled by these companies. RKO distributes Pathé, the Hearst reel goes through M-G-M, the Paramount and Fox companies handle their own reels. Universal, having no hookup with a chain, gets most of the independent houses, though all the reels sell to independents. Large movie houses, like the Radio City Music Hall in New York buy two or three reels, cut out duplications, and paste the remainders together to be shown as the theatre's own newsreel. The newsreel theatres also cut out duplications and re-edit the reels.

The life of a reel is four weeks. After that, even the cheapest houses won't take it, and the prints are sold for scrap film, the silver being salvageable.

The reels make little or no money, since they operate on a budget handed down by the parent company, and the editors are not inclined to sacrifice their coverage for a few pennies. If they did, the profits would probably be taken away from them and the budget cut for the next year, anyhow. They concentrate on getting good coverage, good pictures, and fast delivery. There is little or no editorialising, since the screens belong to the exhibitors, who are of all creeds, politics, and races. A notable exception to this occurred in California in 1934, when Upton Sinclair ran for governor on his EPIC programme. Certain newsreels showed tramps and bums pouring into the state on freight trains, expressing their determination to go to California and live off the government if Sinclair won. The scenes were staged, if not actually faked, and I, seeing them in San Francisco and Los Angeles theatres that summer, thought the freedom of the reels had come to an end. Nothing like it has happened since.

Reels of football games, filmed almost in entirety (when edited and trimmed to a hundred feet they are more lucid and thrilling than the actual encounter) are not released to coaches until the season is over. They are valuable for scouting, and coaches of teams on the participants' schedules used to buy prints of the full footage. Gruesome scenes are usually eliminated now, because audience reaction is bad. One company was forced to defend itself—successfully it turned out—against a suit by a woman who said that the sight of Dillinger on a slab brought on an abortion.

The newsreel morgues are as valuable as newspaper morgues, and are used more and more to give background to a story or a person of importance who has died or has been elevated in position. You never can tell what you have in the morgue. During the crisis over the English crown, Fox discovered it had a reel of King Edward and Mrs. Simpson in bathing. It had been taken some time before as a human-interest story of the King, and the cameramen didn't even know who the lady was when he made the film. Nor did he bother to find out. Pathé naturally has the best morgue historically, but Fox has priceless shots, made when sound was a novelty, of famous people from George Bernard Shaw to Mussolini and Hitler. At this time they were all eager to try the new contrivance, and they unwittingly gave themselves to posterity as ordinary men, saying ordinary things.

Of all the things which a newsreel editor hates, war is first. It is expensive, it is dangerous for the cameramen, and it seldom if ever produces pictures worth looking at. Not since the days of the Mexican fighting in 1916 have there been good war pictures. Then, Pancho Villa is supposed to have sold the motion-picture rights to his private war for $25,000 and fought several of his battles on location. After that, in every fracas, government censorship marred the chance for action pictures. In the World War the newsreel men weren't allowed to shoot at all; army photographers did the work for propaganda purposes, and the only thrilling thing was Pathé's shot of an Austrian cruiser torpedoed and sunk by an Italian submarine.

The Ethiopian War was a dud, except for Paramount's pictures of the sack of Addis Ababa and Movietone's reel of the bombing of Dessye. The Spanish Revolution has also failed to go off, pictorially, and has been very dangerous for the cameraman. Floods, though expensive, are much easier to handle, and this year the editors had their men on the scene weeks before there was anything to shoot—waiting for the water to rise.

(*Continued on page* 19)

Coronation Newsreels

May 12th was a great opportunity for the British newsreels. Privileged entry into the sacred precincts of Westminster Abbey . . . the old-time ceremonial revealed for the first time to the common gaze . . . princes, prelates and the great people from overseas . . . the men who to-day hold the British Empire together, gathered brilliantly for this symbolic occasion . . . the people of Britain in their millions . . . from town and country, all over . . . working people . . . feeling the sudden sun gladly across their faces after a night in the streets. What have the newsreels made of it? What have they seen through their giant camera batteries, their colour systems, their two-hundredweight lenses?

A picture for all the world to see. No question of restricted home markets; no question of overheads; only a two million pound opportunity and no rights reserved!

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YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

"Bringing the World to the World"

(*contd.*)

Some of the greatest newsreel pictures are accidental. A camera is trained on a racing automobile or a racing aeroplane, and there is a crack-up. When Francesco De Pinedo took off for a transatlantic flight at Floyd Bennett Field, and failed to get into the air, his plane burst into flames, and the newsreel cameras recorded his involuntary cremation. One of the greatest newsreel films ever made was the burning of the *Morro Castle*, which recorded the panic and death of passengers as they fell into the furnace of the ship or drowned in the water.

For posterity, the newsreel has President McKinley, leaving office after his first term (Universal bought it from Vitagraph, whose photographer, thrilled and frightened, turned his crank too fast and made a slow-motion picture); Czar Nicholas reviewing his troops in 1914; King George and the Kaiser on horseback, reviewing troops together; Taft making his inaugural address in a snowstorm; Teddy Roosevelt hunting in Africa; Wilson inaugurating the use of automobiles at inaugurations; soldiers of all nations going to fight in the World War; Foch, Pétain, Pershing, Hindenburg, Haig, Clemenceau, Poincaré, Lloyd George, and the Peace Conference in general; the Wright Brothers at Kittyhawk: Byrd flying over both poles; Lindbergh in Paris; Hauptmann on the witness stand; Dillinger on a slab; Jack Johnson, Jim Jeffries, Tilden, Dempsey, Nurmi, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and countless other figures of earth, and the earth on which they trod—the earth of floods, fires, panics, earthquakes, volcanoes, tidal waves, tornadoes, and parades, parades, parades.

"Spigotty Andy"

The cameraman has his own saga, a story of heroism, ingenuity, and a sense of humour. With a bitter understanding of the unappreciated place which his work has in the minds of movie addicts, he has enshrined a symbolic figure as the cameraman's place in history, "Spigotty Andy."

Spigotty Andy was a Chilean who burned with desire to be a newsreel cameraman. For years he sent long letters, half Spanish, half English, to the Paramount editors in New York, outlining a wonderful and always unusable story which he was all ready to shoot as soon as an advance of raw film arrived from Paramount. Then a revolution broke out in Chile, and Paramount cabled Andy that he could go ahead. He was on the spot. This was his chance.

He didn't answer the cable, or another one which was sent, and no film came from him. They found out why. He had gone with the government troops to a hill at the outskirts of the city, put a press card in his hat, and waited by his camera.

When the attack came the government troops fled, but Andy, blissfully sure that a cameraman is immune, cranked away as the rebels advanced. They found him the next day, his hand still gripping the crank of his shattered machine, dead—quite dead, as the English say. So he was enshrined as a hero, though no foot of his film was ever screened. Newsreel men like that story. It seems to mean something to them, something ironic and satisfying, like the note which accompanied Pierre Luck's first films of the Spanish Revolution, sent to Fox Movietone: "If you find on developing that the negative quality is not up to standard, please forgive me, and take into consideration that a good deal of it was shot under danger of life." A guy is apt to get nervous.

Diary of the Coronation Reels

May 10th.—Newsreel editors are downhearted, sad-faced, and without hope.

May 11th.—They smile faintly, still look suspicious, shake their heads.

May 12th.

9 a.m. Their eyes fill with tears.

11.30 a.m. They sit down and weep. For the rest of the joyous day nothing will console them.

10 p.m. Britain's newsreel editors are shouting to the skies, jumping on cutting benches, burning the wires with frantic congratulations to each other.

The reason for so much fluctuation on the dial:

Two days before the Coronation, final camera tests were made in the Abbey, for the filming of the Coronation Service. At the last moment, the Earl Marshal had found room for all five reels and had given greatly increased facilities to the cameramen. All five were to exchange "rota prints." (See page 30).

At almost every stage the King and Queen would be within range of at least three cameras. In newsreel jargon, the "coverage" was 100 per cent. But . . . . The camera tests were through—the negatives had hardly any picture on them. After months of planning, there still was not enough light in the Abbey, and nothing could be done about it. The Earl Marshal would not permit more lighting, for fear of glare in royal eyes.

The Coronation-eve smile was caused by the arrival from America of a carefully sealed package containing a few thousand feet of specially prepared "hyper-sensitised" film—claimed to be 50 per cent faster than anything that had ever been loaded into a British camera. But newsreel editors weren't taking too much for granted. Still, if to-morrow would only dawn a brilliant sunny day!

But in the morning it was sunny only in tiny patches, and soon the clouds rolled across, and the grey smoke beat down. By midday, as the Abbey Service began to echo round the pillars, and dull became almost winter-dark, the editors put on their black ties.

But in the evening, as the negatives rolled off the developing machines, rumours began to spread. Rumours became certainties, certainties became facts, and the wild story broke. The "hyper-sensitised stock" had worked a miracle. Not only was there a printable picture on the negative, the most famous church in the world had been turned into a film studio, had produced pictures of semi-studio quality. The pattern on the Queen's train was there in all its detail. Every inscription on the ecclesiastical copes, almost the writing on the King's oath sheet!

The five reels had between them shot about 10,000 feet of film. Each had recorded the sound from the broadcast. There followed, in five cutting rooms, almost twenty hours of continuous editing, making sense out of the world's most complicated ceremony. And at last the newsreels released to the world the most staggeringly dramatic, the most amazing, newsreel story in the history of screen reporting.

The fact of taking part in a ceremony that for a thousand years has never been seen by more than a handful of people, may have something to do with the surprising impact of the story. Nothing on the screen has ever been quite so 'other-worldly' as this, so far removed from reality. It has the far-off 'dream fantasy' of a story by Fiona Macleod, some of the grace of a dance by Pavlova, yet coupled with the grotesque barbarity of L'Après Midi d'un Faune. The world will like it and loathe it. But the world will have nothing but admiration for the actors who played their parts with such skill, in a play that was not of their writing.

With all reels showing the same pictures, and the production sequence bound to narrow limits, there is little to choose between the reels. General opinion seems to send Pathé past the post first, with slick production by Fred Watts, and an able commentary.

R. E.

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REVIEW OF REVIEWS Edited by H. E. Blyth

Review of the Month

LOST HORIZON. (Frank Capra—Columbia). Ronald Colman, Jane Wyatt, Edward Everett Horton, Margo, H. B. Warner.

In discussing this as a film with an idea, I think I am following the wish of the producers. Publicity has emphasised that this film is regarded by themselves as their masterpiece; that it contains "a great message." As a piece of entertainment, as a sample of cinema virtuosity, I will agree that it is something of a masterpiece. The early section, from the excited opening scene to the crashing of the plane, comprises in itself a story-telling sequence that could scarcely be bettered as a build-up of suspense. There are only a few flaws, the major one being the introduction of Edward Everett Horton, in a needless attempt at comic relief. There are masterpiece-views in the mountain photography.

But to get to the message: *Lost Horizon* is a masterpiece of inspirational evasion. It would hardly seem fair to take romantic entertainment so seriously, were it not so pretentiously portentous. And it is in this innocent mask of romance and escape that a certain danger lies. Let us set down the by now familiar basic idea of *Lost Horizon*; An ageless head lama, once a Christian missionary, is gathering the culture of the world: books, art treasures, scientific knowledge, storing it away in the buildings of his lamasery accessible only by a hidden pass among the mountains of Tibet. For he sees mankind rushing to a war of utter destruction. He believes that his little settlement will be overlooked in this war, and thus, the best of mankind's culture and civilisation will have been preserved.

The first danger in this "inspirational" message is that it contains a subtly pervasive defeatism. The film induces the audience to accept the idea that mankind is doomed; a war of annihilation is inevitable. Secondly, it induces the hopeless attitude that hope lies only in some fantastic mode of escape, some Noah's Ark in the Tibetan wilds. This romanticism was harmless in a novel, as the thing was frankly a tale; but given the believableness of a motion picture, the romantic idea begins to function a little too strongly.

Now let us examine the Utopian system of economy practised by the lamas. First, there is a medieval paternalism about the place. The humble dwellings in the valley are dominated by the magnificent, modernistic-baronial palaces of the lamas. While every modern luxury is present in the palaces of the lamas, it is apparent that the valley-folk live in an almost primitive state. Everybody smiles, we are told, because everybody has everything he wants. There is an abundance of all necessities. And further, there is gold. The lamasery is able to buy and store away the treasures of the world by the simple expedient of lifting chunks of gold from the mountain-side. It is presumed that in the universal Utopia envisioned in the regeneration of the world, a similar favourable balance of exchange will exist in all localities.

This, then, is the great "Message." Let us be content with things as they are, for we can't avoid the great world catastrophe that is coming. After we are annihilated, a new race will grow up in our place, engendered by Mr. Ronald Colman and Jane Wyatt, everybody will happily do what the old lamas on the hill tell them to do, there will be gold on every hillside, and everybody will remain youthful forever, and the air will be filled with music from flutes on the tails of pigeons. If you ask me, it's molasses, sickening if taken in too great quantity. —Meyer Levin, *Esquire*

"Pépé le Moko"

The intellectuals won't like *Lost Horizon* because it's so simple. The intellectuals are deliberately complex. They're churning round and round in their own troubles. They make their own chains, their own problems, their own heartaches. If a little girl loves her father, they say it's sex. If one man does something friendly for another, they say it's sex. Frankly, I don't care much what they say, because they're not real people, and I don't believe in them. If I made *Lost Horizon* again to-day, I shouldn't change a thing. Technically, of course, it should have ended on that toast in the club. We made it that way, and tried it out in Hollywood, but the audience didn't like it. They wanted to be sure that Robert Conway got back to his Utopia. And I don't blame them. The audiences love the lama's speeches. They didn't like the same sort of thing in the Wells picture, *Things to Come*, because it doesn't give them any answer to their problems. It is left with a question mark at the end, nothing to substitute for the bombs and gas and killing. It isn't simple enough. All the great men, from Demosthenes downwards, have been simple. The lama's speeches, although they may seem silly to the highbrows, are a fairly sound boiling down of the whole Christian doctrine. They will be doing pretty well if they just take home those two words, *Be Kind.*

—Frank Capra, *interviewed by C. A. Lejeune*

PÉPÉ LE MOKO. (Julien Duvivier—French.) Jean Gabin, Mireille Balin, Lucas Gridoux.

In my first burst of enthusiasm, I would have said that *Pépé Le Moko* is the most brilliant film ever produced in a French studio. Perhaps it is not quite as good as that, but it is enormously, and horribly, memorable. It is a story of the underworld of Algiers, the Casbah—the native quarter high up on a hill, with its winding streets and terraces descending to the sea. Here the outlaws live, safe from the police as long as they do not descend to the town below. The king of them all is a youngish man, a gambler and a lover, Pépé Le Moko. The French police want Pépé. Will they lure him down into the town? Again and again they try. At last a woman gets him. He is caught and kills himself with a penknife. The woman, her job done, sails away. There is nothing complex in the entire picture. The direction is masterly; the sound and camera-work creative; the acting just about as well done as screen acting can be. This is something that you must see.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Perhaps there have been pictures as exciting on the "thriller" level as this before, but I cannot remember one which has succeeded so admirably in raising the thriller to poetic level. *Winterset* seems a little jejeune and obvious and literary beside it. *Fury*, perhaps, is its equal. Acting and direction are both superb. This is one of the most exciting and moving films I can remember seeing.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

THE MAN IN POSSESSION. (W. S. Van Dyke—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Jean Harlow, Robert Taylor, Reginald Owen, E. E. Clive, Una O'Connor.

This is a smooth and well-made film which has had abundance of care and craft expended on it, and which just amounts to hardly anything at all because Miss Jean Harlow is absurdly miscast. Crystal Wetherby hopes to be married by a supposedly rich man who imagines she is herself enormously rich. The rich man's scapegrace brother, Raymond, intervenes, discovers that the lady is a prey to writs and bailiffs, and becomes her handsome unmanageable butler. This part, too, may be said to roar out for Mr. Robert Montgomery, but is given to the comparatively amateurish Mr. Robert Taylor. It is not the fault of Miss Harlow that she is short instead of commanding, and merely peevish when she should be disdainful, though perhaps she might learn to make her naked shoulders less petulant. Miss Harlow, in short, slouches sullenly through what ought to be high comedy as if she did not care a rap for it, and wears some slashed black velvet gowns as if she liked them no better than the story.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

The conspiracy to provide a spell of light and amusing entertainment succeeds. Pace is brisk and humour plentiful, and the ingenious situaations are adroitly handled. Jean Harlow here returns to a co-starring partnership. It was an inspiration to team her with Robert Taylor. Tall and handsome, both of them, they provide also the contrast between blonde beauty and dark-haired masculinity. Jean Harlow's performance is well-nigh flawless, whether in disdainful mood, tempestuous anger, or yielding grace. Robert Taylor rapidly develops as an actor. He might easily have remained dependent on his good looks for a high salary. Evidently he has greater ambitions. Opposite Garbo in *Camille* he was a little out of his depth, but came through creditably. His work always shows sincerity; when not so severely tested he has so much acting ability that I am inclined to think that his fan mail would not be much smaller even if he were not blessed with that Apollo-like countenance.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

GLAMOROUS NIGHT. (Brian Desmond Hurst—Associated British.)
Mary Ellis, Otto Kruger, Victor Jory, Barry Mackay.

Glamorous Night is about a Ruritanian King who loves a gipsy, and a scheming Prime Minister, who exiles the royal mistress, makes himself dictator and is about to murder the king when the gipsy enters the capital at the head of her people. The plot belongs to the age of *The Bing Boys* and *The Maid of the Mountains;* one waits for jokes about blighty, although Mr. Novello has tried to bring it up to date with arch references to coloured shirts. It is about as bogus as a film could be, but it is well photographed by Wagner, Lang's ace cameraman in the old Ufa days, and quite well directed by Mr. Brian Desmond Hurst. It has the advantage of Miss Mary Ellis's daemonic good looks, and Mr. Hurst deserves some credit for never once taking Miss Ellis's mouth in a close-up as she sings Mr. Novello's peculiarly flat songs.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

The film version of *Glamorous Night*, Ivor Novello's great Drury Lane success, proved disappointing in almost every respect except for the welcome reappearance of Mary Ellis and Trefor Jones in their original parts, and for Mr. Novello's music, as enchanting as ever. I disliked Otto Kruger as the King; as for the gentleman who played the villain, his method of masticating his words rather than speaking them threw me into a despondency from which I have not yet recovered.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

STOWAWAY. (William A. Seiter—20th Century—Fox.)
Shirley Temple, Robert Young, Alice Faye, Arthur Treacher.

I surrender, I am abashed and disarmed and open-mouthed before the twentieth century (era, not studio) miracle, Shirley Temple. There is a moment in this latest film when she sings a ditty and then renders it in wicked mimicry of Jolson, Cantor and Astaire and Rogers. Time may march on as it will, but it will be hard-pressed to eclipse a seven-year old girl imitating a famous dance-team single-handed. By the way, this Faye girl, if you can spare a thought from the Temple, is terrific. She has looks of the Harlow sort, with a gentler manner, and is, as you ought to know by now, the best girl crooner in the business.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

Film-fans are Herodian in their desires: they want a fresh Massacre of Innocents. I have never seen Miss Temple, and I cannot, therefore, say how far the demand for her demise is justified; but I feel suspicious of the people who proclaim their abhorrence of child actors and actresses. I doubt if they like children anywhere, and I am certain that they have all the instincts of the more suppressive pedagogues, the sort who, like the father of Francis Place, never met a child without

W.F.N. SELECTION

Pépé le Moko * *

Lost Horizon *

The Man in Possession *

Other Films Covered

Glamorous Night

Stowaway

Quality Street

Lloyds of London

Crown and Glory

For You Alone

London Melody

That Girl from Paris

Burgtheater

Kimiko

"Her Phoebe Throssel needs a neurologist"

hitting it. If ever I see Miss Temple I fully expect to find her entirely charming. How can this child have seized so firmly the favour of millions of film-fans if she is fit only to be incinerated? I would much rather roast alive the people who yap at her. I have seen some of these people, and I do not like the look of them. They are the sort that flog infants for their own, that is to say, the floggers', good.

—St. John Ervine, *The Sunday Observer*

Critical Summary.

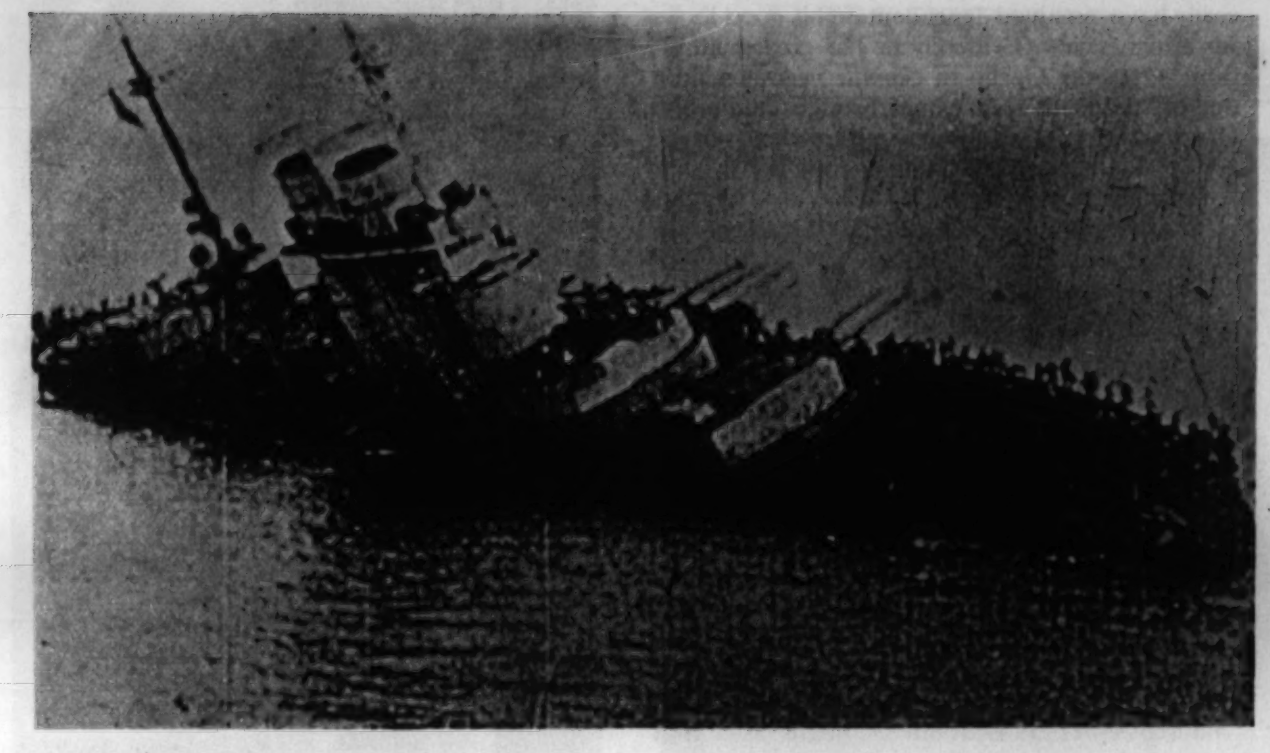
'And even the ranks of Tuscany
Could scarce forbear to cheer.'

QUALITY STREET. (George Stevens—RKO Radio.)
Katharine Hepburn, Franchot Tone, Eric Blore, Bonita Granville.

Quality Street is strictly a self-propelled picture, tearing breathlessly, almost hysterically, through Barrie's quizzical account of a man-hunt, the deadliest man-hunt of all, in fact: that of a woman with spinsterhood staring her in the mirror, for the elusive and nebulously attractive quarry called a husband.

It was not so much the chase that upset us, for Sir James had made it pathetic and incredible and amusing and ironic by turns. But we were exhausted by the intensity of Miss Hepburn's concentration on it. Her Phoebe Throssel needs a neurologist far more than a husband. Such flutterings and jitterings and twitchings, such handwringings and mouth-quiverings, such runnings about and eyebrow-raisings have not been seen on a screen in many a moon. Surely Barrie had not imagined a Phoebe like this; surely the dashing Captain Valentine Brown, seeking peace after the Napoleonic wars, could not have entered this matrimonial campaign with any degree of assurance.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*



"Crown and Glory"

Critical Summary. (*Quality Street*)

It is becoming increasingly ironical that the film which is now most frequently recalled in connection with Katharine Hepburn should be *Morning Glory*. The critics have not been very complimentary about Miss Hepburn's more recent pictures.

LLOYDS OF LONDON. (Henry King—20th Century-Fox.)

Tyrone Power, Madeleine Carroll, Freddie Bartholomew, Guy Standing, Aubrey Smith.

It is not often that we find films of this calibre, and when we do I think we should let down our critical defences and admit that this is a really magnificent achievement. Once again Hollywood has made the sort of film which would have gained for the British film industry all the goodwill of Britain had it been made in Britain. This film, which is as good as *Cavalcade* or *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, is really magnificent stuff. It is very hard to believe that Horatio Nelson, in the stress of finding the French fleet, should have thought of having written to a pal he had not met for more than thirty years, but the story is so good that its improbabilities are of very little concern. If you do not like this film I simply cannot help it. It is a picture you ought to like, and you ought to agitate for the making of many more such films in Britain.

—Walter Webster, *The Sunday Pictorial*

The Union Jack in the last few years has been vigorously and with no little effect waved by Hollywood; now it is the turn of the White Ensign, and the only escape from embarrassment is to be found in the comfortable fact that the colours are faulty. The flag might well have been that of a nineteenth-century Ruritania, and apart from the monotonous repetition of the words "England," "Nelson," and "Lloyds," there was little or nothing to identify the scenes on the screen with the England of the Napoleonic wars. It is disheartening that the films, just when they seem on the verge of growing up, should every now and again relapse into the childish when they are faced with an adult subject. Childish is the correct word, for some of the scenes shown of the Battle of Trafalgar bear an unfortunate resemblance to a more than usually spirited production of the pirate-ship adventures in *Peter Pan*.

—*The Times*

Critical Summary.

The reference to *Bengal Lancer* in the first review probably provides the solution to this difference of opinion, for the film world can be divided into those who did and those who did not like this picture. To those who did, *Lloyds of London*, *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and other of Hollywood's English epics will appeal. You pay your money, and you take your choice.

CROWN AND GLORY. (Paramount Coronation Film.)

For most of its length this is unexceptional, made up of newsreel shots made familiar to us by the Jubilee films. The events of the abdication are tactfully skated over. But once having brought the present King to the throne the film turns itself into propaganda for re-armament.

Shots of battleships fill the screen. Britain realises, we are told, that to be fully armed is a guarantee against war. "Land of Hope and Glory" swells up on the sound-track. Massed shots of bombers, "Make thee mightier yet." More battleships. The Navy, we are told, has been whittled to the bone by Disarmament Conferences "betrayed by other nations."

The commentary during this sequence is tendentious in the extreme. There is hardly a sentence that would not be challenged by any opposition Member of Parliament, or, indeed, any impartial observer of affairs. I doubt whether many supporters of the Government would regard it as a fair and objective picture. The effect of this facile and swaggering rhetoric is to make the lines from "Richard II" which follow, sound false and artificial.

The point is whether it is good taste to introduce into a film dealing with the monarchy a statement of controversial current issues that will offend millions of citizens who feel nothing but loyalty and affection to the King and Royal Family. It smacks of exploiting the Coronation for a partisan purpose—which I personally find a nauseating proceeding.

—Frank Evans, *The Newcastle Evening Chronicle*

FOR YOU ALONE. (Robert Riskin—Columbia.)

Grace Moore, Cary Grant.

Everybody must at some time in his life have seen a Grace Moore picture; and if you have seen one of them, you've seen them all. There are, if you want to be scrupulous, two minute points of difference between this Moore film and its predecessors. The first is that Miss Moore sings a bit of low-down music in rather an engaging way; "Minnie the Moocher" is the selection. The second novelty is the introduction into the dialogue of three words which, I am willing to bet, have never before been spoken on a sound track. The words are "approbation," "Gauguin," and "sycophant." If you want to know how they are worked into the story, you must see *For You Alone*. —Russell Maloney, *The New Yorker*

She is the opera star surrounded by sycophants, who longs to return to America but is prevented by passport difficulties. He is an artist who counts the world well lost while he can follow his own inclinations and indulge in rough-shod riding over sentiment which hides a loyal and gallant heart. They are married—it is purely a device to get the opera star back to New York—but romance steps in as the sycophants fade out. It may matter very little to you that when Mr. Grant goes out to buy a wedding present for his far from amiable wife he should come back with what he describes as a genuine Gauguin—and it looks like one, too: but it only shows that even Hollywood has an artistic temperament. The singing? I had almost forgotten it . . . But the numbers range from "Minnie the Moocher" to Schubert's "Serenade," which seems fair all round. Miss Moore wears "creations" that seemed to me, once or twice, abominable, but perhaps a male critic's view on such a matter ought to be kept to himself. Or had it?

—*The Birmingham Mail*

LONDON MELODY. (Herbert Wilcox—Herbert Wilcox Productions.)

Anna Neagle, Tullio Carminati, Robert Douglas, Horace Hodges.

You have seen the one about the distinguished official (soldier, sailor, business man—there are no ends to some script writers' resource) who takes the blame for his young rival's blunder, only to find that the girl really loved him all the time? Well, here it is again, but so well directed and so well acted that all but the very hard-boiled will find it agreeable entertainment. Miss Neagle, Little Orphan Anna, is charming as the girl who lives with pickpockets (without the slightest suggestion of impropriety) and makes a success as a cabaret singer; Tullio Carminati gives a polished performance as her benefactor; and Robert Douglas, the hero of *Our Fighting Navy*, is again effective as his rival—"the best dancer and tennis player in Shanghai," but a cad who doesn't quite play with a straight bat.

—Campbell Dixon, *The Daily Telegraph*

Possibly by the exertion of stronger will-power than mine, you can believe in a foreign diplomat chief in London who falls in love with a girl street dancer to a piano-organ. If not, you can still find interest and charm in the personalities. The production is handsome, but the people are without exception incredible, and the story the most bewildering rubbish. I may be hopelessly wrong in believing that these things matter; and if the picture is a huge success I shall not be at all surprised.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

Critical Summary.

Mr. Herbert Wilcox has in the past handled Miss Anna Neagle with a shrewd understanding

London Melody (cont.)

of the box-office. His stories may have been all too frequently bewildering rubbish, but they have also been frequently huge successes. *London Melody* is yet another film based on this safety-first policy. It remains to be seen whether he has, in casting Miss Neagle as Queen Victoria, been willing to chance the box-office in an attempt to achieve something better.

THAT GIRL FROM PARIS. (Leigh Jason—RKO Radio.)
Lily Pons, Jack Oakie, Mischa Auer, Gene Raymond, Herman Bing.

Miss Lily Pons, in her new picture, sings an aria from "The Barber of Seville," a tune or two by one Arthur Schwartz, and "Le ruban azur," which seems to be quite a new name for "The Blue Danube." Otherwise the film is something, one might say, of a *pons asinorum;* broad knock-about clowning, with Mr. Jack Oakie as the chief clown.

By methods only known to scenario writers, Mr. Oakie and his gang of jazz players pick up Miss Pons in Paris, and promote her, with an interval in a cheap roadhouse, to the New York Metropolitan. We have already learnt, through the educational agency of the cinema, how Miss Grace Moore got to the Metropolitan, and how Mr. Lawrence Tibbett got to the Metropolitan, and, I think, how Miss Gladys Swarthout got to the Metropolitan. I have no doubt we shall very soon be learning how Miss Deanna Durbin and Master Bobby Breen got to the Metropolitan. Personally, I am heartily sick of the Metropolitan, and am only interested in learning how all these eminent people are going to get away from it.

Why not send Shirley Temple to the Metropolitan and call it a day?

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Continental Films

BURGTHEATER. (Willy Forst—Austrian.)
Werner Krauss, Hans Moser, Willy Eichberger, Hortense Raky, Olga Tschechowa.

Like the great majority of Viennese films, this is concerned with the private life of professional entertainers. M. Willy Forst's directing gives the film both lucidity and a continuous tension, the settings—the date of the film is 1898—are interesting enough, and the acting is always effective. Mlle. Hortense Raky, indeed, is very charming in the part of the heroine, and M. Willy Eichberger gives an amusing caricature of a preposterously enthusiastic young actor. But as almost always when the story is about actors or musicians, the sufferings of the characters seem curiously unreal and their ardours artificial. The theme of an actor in love is excellent for satire or malicious observation, but here it is almost always taken sadly and seriously, with some rather obvious irony when the great actor plays a part on the stage that resembles his own position in real life. It is, in fact, a convention of the films that entertainers are suitable people for romantic situations, and a convention which is certainly less helpful than that which makes royal personages fit for tragedies. It leads at once to confusions about nature and art, sincerity and pretence, and its defects are immediately apparent even in so sensible and well directed a film as this.

—*The Times*

KIMIKO. (Mikio Naruse—Japanese.)
Sachiko Chiba, Tomoko Itoh, Yuriko Hanabusa, Sadao Maruyama.

I assume that this Nipponese movie was originally made as ordinary entertainment for its own public and not for a special group of Western curiosity-seekers. Obviously, the Far East studio made *Kimiko* for its own compatriots, and that it will amuse those who also love their J. M. Barrie merely goes to show again how small this world is. Nostalgic tourists will cry a little at glimpses of Tokyo streets and interiors, and of the mountains of Nagano. Manhattan provincials like myself can find simpler pleasures in it. The two little women in the tub are bound to amuse us. The absurd son is funny. And above all, the mother, I think, is superb. This character is a perfect sketch of the arty matron, busy with her poems. I suspect it's an indication of an older, wiser civilisation that the husband of this absorbed poetess may leave her and turn to his geisha in Kamibayashi without there being any particular plot upheaval. It's all understood and accepted, and, even to us Westerners, startlingly natural. —John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Kimiko is a curious hybrid of East and West, with something of the best and worst features of each. It apes the Hollywood technique, but rather crudely; it expresses, in stock Western terms, the refreshingly realistic morality of the Orient. The picture is lethargic of pace, repetitive and awkwardly contrived. It has a distressing habit of stumbling over the threshold of each new scene; its fadeouts and dissolves are awkwardly amateur. Yet it has a certain sturdy honesty in the resolution of its problem and the performances are expert.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

PRISONERS. (Russian.)

A new film *Prisoners* adapted from the famous Soviet play *Aristocrats* by N. Pogodin, was shown at the recent congress of Peace and Friendship with the U.S.S.R. at the Cambridge Theatre. It is a study of prisoners, civil and political, who built the White Sea Baltic Canal under the supervision of the G.P.U. Although the direction is undistinguished, the acting is excellent. The story is more effective in the theatre, the sudden reformations of saboteurs and thieves appearing somewhat too rapid for the realistic cinema.

M.S.

PYGMALION. (Ludwig Berger—Dutch.)

Though Bernard Shaw violently condemned the German film version of his famous comedy *Pygmalion*, it is believed in Holland that the new Dutch version will be in accordance with his cinematic principles. In Germany much of the original dialogue was sacrificed to give the film artistic merit, the final result having little in common with the theatrical conception. Dr. Ludwig Berger, however, director of the Dutch version, filmed the story as a stage play, disregarding the "film is an art" principle. The film is reported to have filled the cinemas to capacity whereas a first-class theatrical company had been playing "Pygmalion" on the stage to empty houses only a week before. Which upholds Shaw's "dialogue principle" that speech is of primary importance in a film, and that action should have only secondary consideration, its use being limited to emphasising dialogue.

With a brilliant cast, Pygmalion has been acclaimed one of the best pictures made in the Netherlands.

R. H. KIEK

"Village of Embroiderers"

For **STRICKENDE DORF**—a new German documentary—I can find no title less cumbersome than "Village of Embroiderers."

The village in question is called Schoenwald, near Gleiwitz in Silesia. Here a tradition has survived which dates back six centuries, long before industry came to a peaceful agricultural region.

The film has been made by Fritz Puchstein with the object of showing that this art of embroidery is alive, that it means as much to the women of to-day as it did to their mothers and grandmothers who taught them its traditions. Most of the men in the village are employed in the mines nearby, others have inherited the small farms in its vicinity.

The old style of hairdressing has not changed and work-a-day clothes and Sunday best are after the same pattern. As Dr. Puchstein expresses it, these are no "suitcase customs" only to be taken out for special festivities, as in other parts of Germany.

Every small piece of material is precious. As soon as the children can hold a needle they are eager to start working and everything possible down to the voluminous skirts worn, bears witness to the industry of these people.

A pattern is never used and there is no School of Embroidery for this would mean a loss of that originality which is possible within the bounds of the villager's tradition.

The women are seen in their homes and at their work. Each garden displays the favourite flowers, the designs and combination of colours preferred by the owners. Commentary gives a psychological interpretation to the individual characteristics which are revealed in each woman's work.

No shading is used in the designs and I am told that "the colours are taken from nature, the blue of the sky, the green of the leaves, the yellow of the wheat, red as the colour of blood and life."

Several other films dealing with old customs have been made by Dr. Puchstein. Among them *Wedding in Upper Silesia* and a series called *Peasant Artists*, showing the work of carvers, weavers, glassblowers, basketmakers and rope-makers, etc. This enterprising young director has made documentaries varying from studies in child psychology to such productions as *The pencil, a companion through life.*

PATRICIA HUTCHINS

COCKA

By Rodney H

Sayings of the Month

"A gaping electrician has spoiled more kiss scenes than the actors have." —*Dick Powell.*

"My main concern just now is my golf. I have improved considerably."—*Noel Coward.*

"To me it is the man's brains which are much more important than the cast of his features or the build of his body." —*Marlene Dietrich.*

"I get sick of myself as a blonde."—*June Knight.*

"While I was single, it was all right being the perfect wife on celluloid. But now I'm married it's different."—*Myrna Loy.*

"The majority of our audiences are old bucks whom nothing could harm." —*A Strip-Tease Girl.*

"I have always regarded this industry (*films*) as the greatest menace that has ever arisen to literature, art and civilisation."—*Mr. Justice Mackinnon.*

How's Your Exploitation This Morning?

WORLD FILM NEWS crashes through with a new feature! Exploitation Corner! Hints to showmen on how to put the films over! If you don't see the film you want in this column, we know just the kind of film you do want. Gather round, chicks, and cut yourself a slice of exploitation.

The Good Earth. Cover the foyer of your theatre with about three feet of rich, loamy soil. Issue clods of turf instead of tickets. Put a ploughshare on every seat.

Dark Journey. Take the torches away from your ushers and have them show patrons to their seats in complete darkness. If they complain, your ushers say, "Well, this is a dark journey, aint it, huh?"

Fire Over England. Dress your commissionaire as a fireman and have him empty buckets of water over passers-by. Burn down the theatre, like you've always wanted to.

Lost Horizon. Give every patron a pair of dummy binoculars and say, "Go ahead and find it, clever."

Winterset. Have your girl-friends walk around the neighbourhood in red flannel underwear. If we're right about your girl-friends, this should be a cinch.

Elephant Boy. Have a boy sitting on an elephant in the foyer. Or, give it a news slant, have an elephant sit on a boy. We know just the boy.

This feature will continue every month until next month when Dean Inge begins his new series, "Confessions of A Good-Time Charlie.'

O, Mae is Going West, Lads

"It seems to me hard to remain in love with a millionaire."—*Mae West.*

Behind the stately forehead
Of Mae, the Rolling West,
The wisest cracks are quarried
And round the world expressed.
But, dear Miss West,
I *do* protest
When you (quite gravely, too)
Suggest
A girl would find it hard to care
For ever for a millionaire.

If I'd walked from the altar
With one so well endowed,
I do not think I'd falter
In doing as I'd vowed.
I think that I
Would gladly try
To turn a blind,
Forgiving eye
To any funny little kink—
For instance, making me wear mink.

I'd have to tolerate things,
I'd have to eat my pride,
But think of all the great things
I'd have to eat beside.
My bitter cup
Would not be bad
On top of all
The fizz I'd had;
To go the way of all lost souls
Is swell—when you can go by Rolls.

If ever I grew fonder
Of one with fewer pounds,
I'd let my eyes a-wander
Around my spacious grounds;
I'd touch the furs
About my neck,
Caress my husband's
Latest cheque—
Then bite my lip the way girls do
And *bravely* try to see it through.

Come, Come, Aubrey

There are all manner of rumours being woven into Korda's trip, some of them not too accurate. Neither I nor any of my confrères can rightly say what is the purpose of the trip. After all it is his own company's business on which he goes, not mine nor yours . . . but I have my own ideas and I'd lay very heavy money that they are right.

However it is not my forte to delve into these affairs publicly and issue my analyses. But I will hazard this admittedly vague prognostication that there will be very notable results from Alex's trip, results which are likely to create a pretty wide headline or two when they are made known!

—*The Cinema.*

Pause— For Boyish Prank

Feeling romantic after watching the love-scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, a boy of 16:

Climbed through a scullery-window;
Woke up a young married woman;
Then became panic-stricken.

Here is a striking example of beginner's luck. I suppose I have climbed through as many scullery-windows as anybody, and where has it got me? Into a lot of sculleries, that's all. Have I ever been lucky enough to find a young married woman curled up under the mangle? Not on your life. A smell of cooked cabbage has been the only welcome *I've* got.

The magistrate in the case punished the boy by forbidding him to go to the pictures for one year.

Now this strikes me as unnecessarily high-handed treatment. If everyone who has ever woken up a young married woman were to be punished in the same way, our cinemas would be practically empty. They could then be used as tanneries, and would probably smell a lot better.

The magistrate went on to ask the boy: "Did the film-scene give you a romantic impulse?" To which the lad, nervously fingering his rough cloth cap, answered, "Yes."

Incidents such as this are more common than one might imagine. I have an aunt, for instance, who, after seeing *Tarzan Escapes*, spent a happy afternoon swinging from the cables of an electric pylon at Dagenham. The current was immediately switched off, but she wouldn't have noticed it, anyhow.

It was the same aunt who went to see *Ben Hur* and subsequently appropriated a milk-float from a Penge dairy and drove it furiously round Piccadilly Circus in her nightdress, shouting "Hold that Toga!"

She was stopped and questioned by a police-constable, but after informing him that she was the Rome Express, she was allowed to proceed.

* * *

SNOOKS GREISER, W.F.N.'s puckish lift boy, reappeared the other day after an enforced absence of four weeks due to misunderstanding with an exhibitor between the second and third floors. Heavily bandaged, and with broken nose, Snooks has now taken to talking to himself. A W.F.N. stool-pigeon reports overhearing the following soliloquy:—

SNOOKS: "So they thought they could bump me off, huh? Maybe next time they'll use a sub-machine gun. . . . Think I'll spill some real dirt soon and close down any studios that still stick open. . . . Could I do it, huh? I'll say I could. . . . The things I screw out of 'em in this lift. . . . Third floor—why, step right in, Mr. Maxwell."

ALORUM

ey Hobson

W.F.N. Launches Chimp Probe

A disquieting rumour has been circulating recently in Wardour Street to the effect that Mickey, the chimpanzee that escaped from the Liverpool Zoo a few weeks ago, was never really recaptured.

True, an animal answering Mickey's description was apprehended while making passes at a young housewife nearby and rushed back to captivity, but it is believed that what the keepers took to be their chimpanzee was actually a Mr. George Schwitz, associate producer with *Punk Pictures Inc.*

Our investigator, still a bundle of nerves after his last interview with C. A. Lejeune, called yesterday upon Mrs. Schwitz at her home in Tufnell Park. Mrs. Schwitz asked him to sit down, which surprised our investigator. He is accustomed to being knocked down.

"I did notice something queer about George when he came home," she said. "He had been up North on location with a picture called *Down South*, and I remarked on the fact that he was wearing a bowler hat on his return. Imagine my chagrin when, that night, he elected to sleep hanging by one foot from the chandelier!

"But George has always been temperamental," she continued, "so I just went off in high dudgeon." Here she paused to show our investigator the actual dudgeon in which she had gone off. "Next morning he was rather taciturn, but that is nothing unusual. I did notice, however, that he was eating rather more nicely, actually taking a knife and fork to his eggs and bacon. I shall certainly look at him more closely this evening, because if he really is a chimpanzee, it'll mean getting in some special food for his supper, won't it?"

It was announced this morning that Mr. George Schwitz has been elected to the board of *Punk Pictures Inc.*

* * *

Julius Harhngozo, ballet-master of the Budapest Royal Opera House, has composed a Gas Ballet. Ballet shows how people behave during air raid when gas bombs are being dropped. —*News Item.*

Let us all go to the Gas Ballet, mother,
Phosgene is dancing to-night;
We'll learn what to do
When the bombers break through
From her steps so fantastic and light.
So *do* let us go to the Gas Ballet, mother,
To see how a gassed person dances—
We'll go in our masks
And, if anyone asks,
We'll say we've sat next to
ballet fans before and
we're not taking any chances.

Strip Tease and Light Refreshments

Gypsy Rose Lee, famous New York strip-tease exponent, is appearing in a film for Twentieth-Century Fox. An official said: "Gypsy won't even take off a pair of gloves. Her first rôle is a straight dramatic part."

—*News Item.*

After all, how can a girl be dramatic when she is constantly taking off her gloves? Gypsy is said to get £400 a week for her act, which is more than the Fleet Street boys get for *their* startling exposures, hey?

And we know now why movie detectives keep their hats on in the house. They don't want to give those strip-tease gals even the teeniest-weeniest bit of encouragement.

(*Watch this column next month and it won't do your eyes any good.*)

HOT WIRES

PA. ADD FILM "QUOTA" PROBLEMS.
AFTER YEO HTD FIDVUDDN Y MYH SFJOUTNRF UNYIL TOMW WIOUT ISSUING A STATEMT.

—*Daily Express.*

A Laughton Unto Himself

"*Laughton manages to look beautiful with uncombed hair hanging over his face and with his clothes so wrinkled that their original shape is unrecognisable.*"—Marlene Dietrich.

Oh! tear my hair, I do not care,
No more I'll brilliantine it;
And make my quiff appear as if
A comb had never seen it.

Maltreat my ears till each appears
It's argued with a truncheon;
And make my nose resemble those
Prize-fighters take the punch on.

And wipe your boots upon my suits,
Those tailor's masterpieces;
My Sunday bags tear into rags—
To hell with all the creases.

Besmear my shirt with lumps of dirt,
Go right ahead and mess me,
Till Savile Row would never know
That once they used to dress me.

Then make my face look like a place
A battle's just beeen fought on,
So that I'll wear a gypsy air
Like Charlie ("Hot Lips") Laughton.

To you, perhaps, it seems a lapse,
But really it's a neat trick,
That I must learn because I yearn
To go down big with Dietrich.

The moving picture writes and having writ moves on

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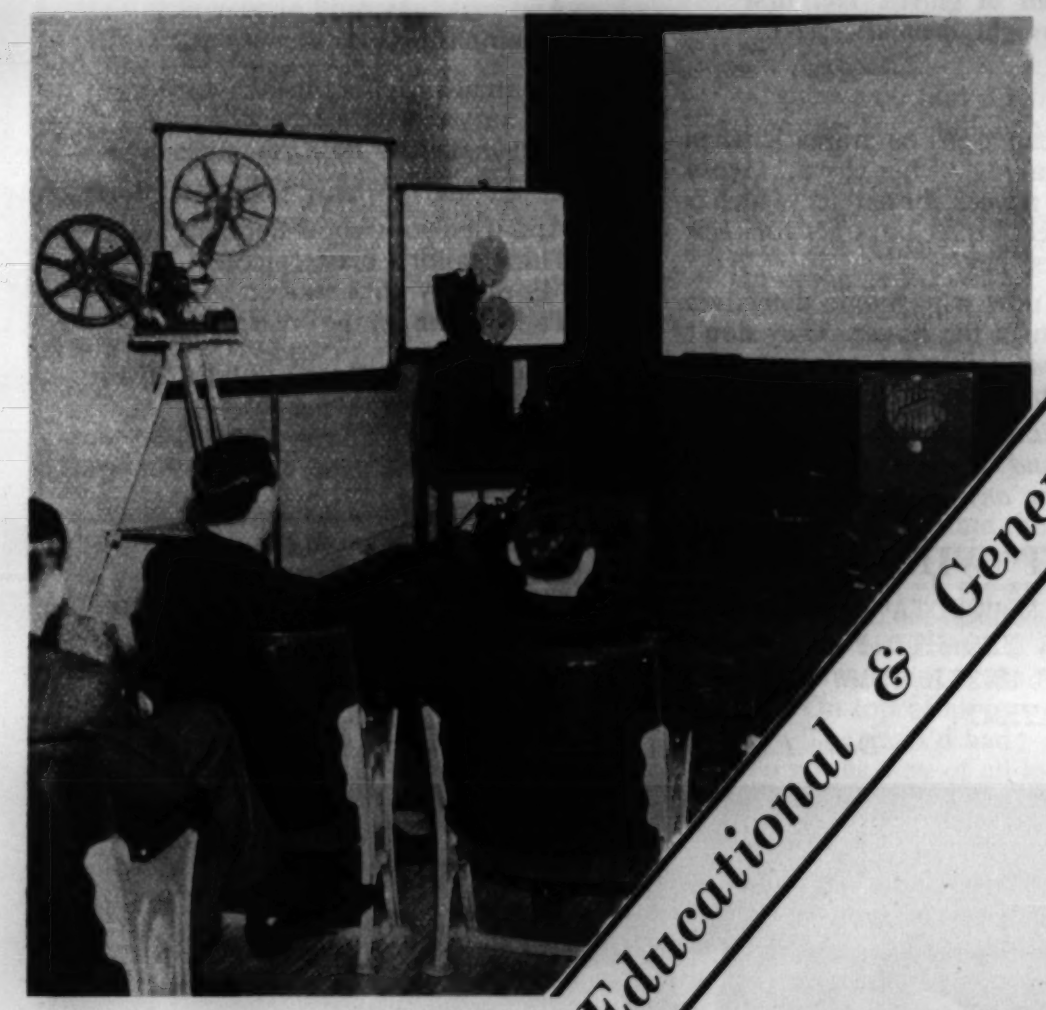

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PEOPLE WITH PURPOSES

Use of Films by Government Depts.

Mr. W. S. Morrison informed the House of Commons of the following facts concerning the use of film by Government departments:

Forty films have been made by the Post Office Film Unit for the purposes of the Public Relations Department of the Post Office, and a further six are in course of production.

Of the forty films completed, nine have been and are being distributed for theatrical display.

In addition, two films have been made by the Post Office Film Unit, on repayment, for the British Broadcasting Corporation and five for the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board.

National Mark

Twenty films have been made by commercial firms on behalf of Government departments as follows :—

Eleven National Mark films for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Six films for the Ministry of Labour.

Three films for the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The National Mark films have been displayed at agricultural shows and on similar occasions. Receipts amount to £55.

Of the six films produced on behalf of the Ministry of Labour, four, relating to the work of the Ministry in connection with training centres and with juvenile advisory committees, are exhibited free of charge by officers of the Ministry to appropriate audiences.

The remaining two are designed for theatrical exhibition, and the receipts in respect of one of these have so far amounted to £27. 7*s*. 9*d*. The other has not yet been shown.

The films supplied for the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research deal with technical subjects—the Cathode Ray Oscillograph, Hull Design and Aircraft Design, and the firm concerned, having made no charge for its services, retains the sole rights of commercial exploitation.

A number of films have been and are being produced on behalf of the Defence Departments for training purposes only.

A film dealing with Ravages by Rats is in course of production for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries by a commercial firm.

Assistance for Theatricals

Assistance has been given by the Admiralty, Air Ministry, and War Office in the form of loans of personnel, equipment, and the like in the production of the following films by commercial firms for theatrical exhibition:

Brown on Resolution, *Deeds Men Do*, *White Ensign*, *Jack Ahoy*, *Second to None*, *Carry On, R.A.F.*, *I Was a Spy*, *Airport*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *S.O.S.*, *Croydon Airport*, *The Iron Duke*, *Things to Come*, *Debt of Honour*, *Death on the Road*, *Orders are Orders*, *Soldiers Three*, *Rhodes*, *Your Son's Career*, and *O.H.M.S.*

The receipts accruing to public funds on account of assistance rendered have amounted to approximately £2,800.

Facilities have also been granted free of charge for the production of topical "Newsreel" and "Magazine" films bearing upon the work of various departments.

The Controller, His Majesty's Stationery Office, has received from film producers, for the use of official film material of which the copyright is vested in him, the sum of £1,951.

News Notes

Following satisfactory reports on the production and distribution of their films during 1936, the Executive Committee of the Irish Tourist Association, 16 Jermyn Street, S.W.1, has decided to increase its allocation for production.

The I.T.A. films have received wide circulation not only in this country, but also in the United States where they have been given extensive publicity in the newspapers.

* * *

During a period of two months, it was found that 59,388 people visited showings of the new Ford Motor Co.'s film programme produced by Publicity Films and Pathé.

In one period of four days at one centre 8,111 people saw the films. This number consisted of 4,740 men, 2,851 women and 790 juveniles.

* * *

The Union of South Africa Publicity and Travel Bureau, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, has released a propaganda film giving a vivid picture of the Gold Mining industry entitled, *The Golden Harvest of the Witwatersrand*.

Canada Invites Bakers' Co-operation

Every Baker in Great Britain is being offered the opportunity of booking for a show in his district a new film *Beyond the Sunset*, produced by the Canadian Wheat Board, 101 Thames House, Milbank, S.W.1. The Board offers film, equipment, and operator free of charge.

Beyond the Sunset not only describes the wheat harvest in Canada, but it is also a travel film covering some of the chief cities and waterways of that Dominion, and also the life of the people.

The wheat land area in Canada is demonstrated diagrammatically and there is a scientific but simple and clear explanation of the reasons why the cold Canadian winters make the soil so suitable for the growing of wheat.

The transport of the grain to England is described in detail, and this gives an opportunity for showing the grain ships on the great lakes, the canals and their enormous locks, and the imposing elevators. In the course of the film, three Canadian farmers are interviewed, and give the audience their views on life in Canada.

* * *

The survey by the Society of Motion Picture Industries reveals that there are now 140 publicity film producing organisations in the United States catering for over 3,000 clients.

A large number of these are using 16 mm. pictures for road-showing and the survey provides the following analysis of these:—

Length of Film	*No. of Films*
1 reel	493
2 reels	199
More than 2 reels ..	155
	847

Of these 531 were silent and 316 were sound.

The survey indicates that in most of these films direct advertising is kept at a minimum and that a considerable number of pictures are devoted to teaching salesmen how to handle customers.

* * *

Two of the assembly halls of the League of Nations at Geneva are to be equipped as cinemas. Among the first films to be shown will be the British air defence film *The Gap*.

The Oswaldtwistle Palace **WON'T** *show a Curzon Programme*

★

There wasn't a Palace at Oswaldtwistle at the time of going to press but even if there was they wouldn't dare to offer the same fare that the Curzon provides for its patrons. Not all problems of film booking are as easy as that. That's why we have a special department for the job. We have cinemas graded so exactly that you can always reach any particular type of audience you want.

★

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FROM SCRIPTS PLANNED BY

JOHN GRIERSON

REALIST FILM UNIT

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People with Purposes—News Notes (contd.)

The number of cinema admissions in the Irish Free State last year was 18¼ *millions, states Liam O. Laoghaire, Secretary of the Irish Film Society. This is equivalent to six visits per annum for every man, woman and child in the Free State. Film rental paid out by Free State Exhibitors amounted to approximately* £200,000.

* * *

The Catholic Film Society is preparing another film entitled *Great Awakening*. The story is by Anthony Young and the production by Terence McArdle.

* * *

The Austin Motor Company, 479 Oxford Street, W.1, has set up a library of motoring and travel films; ten of these are industrial films covering practically every subject from the manufacture of an engine to the making of tyres. Six films deal with travel in England and abroad, and four are of the newsreel or variety type.

The library is open to senior schools, clubs and other vocational or social institutions and copies can be borrowed on both 35mm. and 16mm. stock. All of the films have commentary and music accompaniment, but arrangements have been made so that for silent showings a verbatim copy of the commentary can be read while the film is in progress.

* * *

Joseph Lucas Ltd. make their first entry into the publicity film field with *Electricalities*, a 500-ft. film produced and distributed by Publicity Films. The film covers the whole field of car electrical equipment . . . lamps, dynamos, starters, coil ignition, horns and batteries. The high-spot of the film is a sequence in which electric horns are tested. Sound is converted into light and with the cathode ray oscillograph the sounds are seen. The actual notes of horns have been recorded and the film reproduces these sounds visually as well as aurally.

* * *

Fulham Borough Council Electricity Committee has produced through Gaumont-British Distributors Ltd., a one-reel film dealing with their new Power Station. This is for use at demonstrations in showrooms and elsewhere. while a short version of the film, approximately 300 feet in length, is being shown at 170 cinemas.

* * *

As the result of the showing of a territorial propaganda film *Defence not Defiance* at Ealing, 116 recruits were enrolled.

* * *

A series of 102 medical propaganda films have been ordered by the Film Committee of the Commissar of Health of the Soviet Union.

* * *

The New Zealand Co-operative Pig Marketing Association has produced a second propaganda film dealing with diseases of the pig and the causes underlying them.

* * *

The use of films for electioneering propaganda has been forbidden by the Government of Madras which has issued orders to the President of the film sponsors to ban any pictures containing political propaganda.

Street Lighting

The British Thomson-Houston Company's research staff at Rugby have produced a film entitled *Modern Street Lighting* to illustrate the great advances which have been made during the last few years in the use of lamps of increased efficiency and improved lantern design.

The film, which is silent, shows first of all how the light from a lantern is focused on the road to the best advantage and then, taking typical roads in this country, demonstrates how the lighting has been planned by careful and experienced engineers to eliminate dark patches. The film ends with a complete tour through a length of well lighted road during which the audience can see how clearly all traffic movement is visible to the motorist.

When the film was shown to the Street Lighting Conference arranged by the British Electrical Development Association in Newcastle-on-Tyne, a running commentary was given by Mr. G. S. C. Lucas, of B.T.H. Co., Crown House, Aldwych, W.C.2.

Quarrying

An effort is being made by the Secretary of the Institute of Quarrying to form a library of technical films for use by members of the Institute. The address of the Institute is Salisbury Square House, Fleet Street, E.C.4.

It is proposed that these films should be distributed to branch meetings all over the country.

The following manufacturers have already offered to provide films for the library:—

Messrs. Broom & Wade Ltd. 20-minute film (silent or sound) on the manufacture of this firm's products.

British Road Tar Association. "Coal Mine to Road" and "The Highway."

International Combustion Ltd. "Energy," a film showing the manufacture of this firm's products.

Nordberg Manufacturing Co. Symons Cone Crusher in actual operation, i.e. process of crushing inside the machine.

Pegsons Ltd. Rammers and rippers in operation.

Ropeways Ltd. Film of a ropeway which operates between Tilmanstone Collieries Ltd. and Dover Harbour, a total distance of 7 miles.

And in New York

The first of a series of films, called *Getting Your Money's Worth*, was shown recently in New York. This series sets out to prove that heavy advertising is the reason for large sales, and that the actual value of an article is immaterial. The first issue deals with men's shoes, lead toys, and Grades A and B milk, showing tests that prove the real worth of the commodities and offering advice against misrepresentation. After an enthusiastic reception, plans are afoot to have it shown in schools, clubs, societies and more enlightened commercial theatres. Arthur Kallett, author of "100 Million Guinea Pigs," worked as technical supervisor, in co-operation with the staff of the Consumers Union. Herman Weinberg, American film critic, declared that this picture was "ten times more honest than the March of Time, and certainly more entertaining." Arrangements are being made for English distribution.

Making a Picture—Exhibit for Students

An unusual exhibition giving a comprehensive step-by-step account of the processes involved in the actual making of a motion picture from scenario to release, was recently held by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library in New York. The exhibition, the first of its kind ever assembled, was arranged from material contributed to the Film Library by Walter Wanger and United Artists from the production *You Only Live Once* directed by Fritz Lang, with Sylvia Sidney and Henry Fonda.

The sections displayed covered the sequence from the baseball scene in the prison yard, umpired by Father Dolan (William Gargan), through to the closing of the gates behind Eddie Taylor (Fonda) on his release from prison. Six sets each of four typed pages were displayed so that students of the film could see exactly what changes are made from the original scenario, through first and second revisions, third revision with changes by the director, final continuity and director's shooting script. These were followed by still photographs illustrating the script in detail.

An instance of minor discrepancy in the scenario being caught before actual production begins was shown in an erroneous bit of baseball technique that appeared in the original scenario, was carried unchanged through revisions one and two, to be caught and corrected in the third version. It occurred in the business indicated to accompany Father Dolan's line "You're out!" where the script originally indicated that he was to gesture downwards with both hands. As every baseball fan would quickly recognise, this means the that player is safe, not *out*.

With a running commentary on cards, written by the director, Fritz Lang, the exhibit continued with a series of production charts and notes, pay vouchers and lunch checks for the extras, blue prints of sets, a sheet showing every detail of the cost for one day's work on production, a "shuffle-board" by means of which economical use is made both of sets and of players, the all-important notations recorded after each shot by the script-girl as a guide to the assembly and cutting of the material, instructions for dubbing-in sound and inserts, and finally, sample postal-cards of praise or critical comment from members of the audience that saw the film at its first "sneak preview"; and notes and indications on the numerous changes made, after that, before the release of the film.

Also on exhibition were wood and pasteboard models of the prison and inn sets. These models also indicated the camera positions for the various shots taken in these sets, while still photographs showed director, cameraman and technicians at work.

The Film Library was established in 1935 by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation not only to assemble, catalogue, preserve, and circulate notable films, but to collect and make accessible to students and educational institutions books and periodicals on the film, motion picture memorabilia, historical and critical material, and pertinent data of all kinds relating to the film, past and present. This was its first acquisition of material on the methods of motion picture production.

NEWSREEL RUSHES *by the Commentator*

"HELLO! Is that the Office of Works? This is the Editor of the British Pathetictone News speaking. We would like your permission for our cameramen to take pictures of the Coronation Procession from the Victoria Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace, and from the top of the Admiralty Arch looking down The Mall. What? The other editors have also asked for permission. But there's plenty of room for five cameras at both positions! Oh! You've decided to make it rota—and you leave it to the newsreels to decide which shall turn. Very well, I understand." (And he as replaces the phone.) "Hell! That's b——y well dished it!"

Such might have been the conversation overheard, had the lines been tapped, on many an occasion during the hectic months of newsreel planning that were climaxed on May 12. The telephone eavesdropper, surprised that such a soft spoken word as "rota" should cause an outburst of such "unnewsreelish" language, would pardonably be amazed to learn that "rota" stands for an official outlook that is seriously hampering the newsreels in carrying out their public duty of fast and effective reel reporting. What does "rota" mean? Where does it hit the reels?

To set up the average tripod of a newsreel camera requires one square yard of the earth's surface. But in every single instance, to use that small space, permission has to be granted by someone. In nine stories out of ten, where commercial publicity or propaganda is involved, permission is readily given. But where there is no such commercial incentive, permission has either to be bought dearly, or, where public authorities are concerned, negotiations are conducted in an atmosphere of "we hope you realise what a terrific favour we're doing you!"

Permissions for King & Queen

About two years ago, one of the newsreels applied for permission to take posed pictures of the late King George and Queen Mary. Obviously the Royal Patronage had to be extended equally to all the reels; and to non-film-minded royal secretaries there seemed only two alternatives: Their Majesties would have to pose on five separate occasions, or would have to face a battery of five cameras at one go. A third alternative was suggested by the newsreel chief, to save a busy sovereign's time and trouble; and palace officials gaped as they were told about a common technical film process. After the negative film has been exposed in the camera and developed, it is fed through a printing machine in which a beam of light is passed through a negative on to a second strip of light-sensitive film. This latter takes the imprint of each tiny picture, and after being fixed, becomes the positive print of which copies are shown in the cinemas. But the process can also be reversed, the positive print being fed through the machine, the light beam passing through on to another film strip, this becoming a second or "duplicate" negative. This "dupe negative" is almost as good as the original for printing more positives for the cinemas.

As comprehension dawned slowly in official eyes, the newsreel spokesman continued: "Why not let us take the pictures, then make four master prints for the four other reels, from each of which

Many enquiries have been received by W.F.N. as to the identity of "The Commentator." Actually our newsreel material, much of which is exclusive information, is received from several authoritative sources and edited by Raymond East

can be made a dupe negative. Thus Their Majesties will have to pose once only, while all reels will be equally served." The arrangement was agreed—and the "rota system" was born—one camera for all the reels.

Little did the newsreels dream how the news about rota would spread. "Master prints" appeared in Government memos—white police beards nodded over whispers of "dupe negatives." Within six months rota was being insisted upon by Buckingham Palace, H.M. Office of Works, Scotland Yard, who between them are concerned in ninety-nine out of every hundred stories shot in London streets, who had discovered that dealing with only one newsreel, making room for only one cameraman, was easier, quicker, and cheaper. A reel that tried to steal a march on the others by applying for unusual positions, would be ordered to supply rota prints even before the other reels asked for them. Soon officialdom wasn't waiting to be approached. Reels were told weeks before an event that certain key positions would be rota, that they must decide among themselves which camera should cover. The frequency with which rota cropped up led to a weekly meeting of reel editors, at which they put their names into a hat, and drew for rota positions. Now the weekly meetings often become bi- or tri-; for the Coronation arrangements have come as the climax to the rota rage. There is hardly a position—apart from expensive hired ones on private property—on Crown or public land (i.e. in the street, on public buildings or memorials, and even inside the Abbey), which is not involved in a rota arrangement whereby one cameraman covers for all reels.

Rota Jobs

When one cameraman goes out on a rota job, his expenses are shared by all five reels, and even with the extra cost of making rota prints and dupe negatives, each reel pays only about a quarter of the estimated cost with five cameramen. Why, then, do editors swear at rota?

Most obvious, and to hard pressed editors, most annoying rub, is waste of time. On a rush story, most reels risk scratches for the sake of speed, edit the negative, as soon as it comes off the developing and drying machines. But rota often involves a three-hour wait, while a rival reel develops its negative, makes a master print and delivers it. Then, after the master print has been edited, another hour is lost while the dupe negative is made. Even the reel of the cameraman who took the picture loses time, because the editor cannot get hold of his negative until the four master prints have been made from it. So long does all this take, that sometimes a reel finds its story completely edited apart from two or three vital rota shots, and then the staff has to sit idle for two hours before the picture and track can finally be passed on for re-recording.

Second, though less important, is loss of quality. Even with the most modern laboratory equipment, there is a certain loss of quality between an original and a dupe negative. Hence the advantage to the reel "supplying the rota," i.e. working with the original negative.

But by far the most important aspect of rota is its dampening effect on individual enterprise. In a properly planned newsreel story, each cameraman should be sent out to get a definite prearranged series of shots. Their effectiveness may depend on the use of a certain combination of camera, lenses, and stock. A particular carefully planned stunt shot may be a closely guarded secret from other reels. But when rota steps in, all such pre-conceived plans go overboard. Reel A may have had the ideas, but if reel B wins the ballot and gets the rota, reel A must put up with the shots that reel B wants. Rota discounts the advantage of superior equipment. Reel A may have a wonderful new 100-inch lens, reel B's best may be only 50 inches, but reel B's pride would never allow it to step aside and thus admit equipment weakness.

Rota undermines the best laid newsreel schemes, and the newsreel public ultimately suffers through a system that was started by the newsreels themselves "out of the goodness of their hearts," but of which they have now completely lost control. Where it can save time to men and women the importance of whose work makes their every moment valuable, the rota system is justified. But a Government which is still the prime advocate of the merits of private enterprise, should not continue to permit a lazy officialdom to practise for its own convenience what amounts to a form of press dictatorship.

THE MONTH'S REEL NEWS

Universal's commentator, R. E. Jeffrey, spoke the "line of the month" when he said: "The news value of the Coronation is just about worked out." In fact all reels have been so deeply involved in the colossal Coronation build-up at the expense of all other news, that the past month goes down as one of the dullest on record. Two stories that stand out bring a cheer for one reel; kicks for all five.

A cheer to Gaumont-British for a superbly edited story on wiped-out Guernica. For most reels Spain is now in the oblivion class, with cameramen recalled—but this story, which came via the Fox-Movietone foreign service, brought the Civil War back to the front page, with a climax on commentator Emmett's line: "These were homes once—like YOURS!"

A kick to all reels for staggering mishandling of the bus strike. Here was an eve-of-Coronation story of first magnitude, with issues affecting millions of people. Yet the newsreels were afraid of it—palmed off their public with a few shots of busless streets, a few flashes of busmen's leaders and transport chiefs—while Pathé's commentator nervously apologised with: "Of course, we remain strictly impartial in this unfortunate dispute," and other commentators implied the same in other words. What a dramatic story, had the case been fairly presented for both sides! What a chance missed!

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Notes of the Month

by George Audit

THE unfortunate hysteria produced in the B.B.C. directorate by recent public events has left them feeling rather tame and with a nasty hole in the pocket. So one may safely say that during the next few weeks the listening public will have to jog along on the kind of programme so aptly described by Mr. Val Gielgud as a mixture of sentimentality and soda-water. Nor can producers anticipate so liberal a backing as Mr. D. G. Bridson received for his King Arthur programme shortly before the Coronation.

King Arthur is said to have cost £2,500 to produce, which is really quite a lot considering that it occupied but one and a half hours out of a yearly five thousand. Mr. Bridson was fortunate to obtain some of the best-known London actors, a full-sized Symphony Orchestra, the B.B.C. Chorus and Mr. Val Gielgud for his show. Not a few people who had heard and enjoyed his "March of the '45" and "May Day" programmes were expecting something great. I was frankly disappointed. One might have guessed from the subject that the author was not going to find it easy to reconcile his strong sense of historical reality and his integrated style of radio drama with the scrappy, shadowy phantasmagoria of the Arthurian legends. Perhaps his failure was unavoidable. King Arthur was a hotch-potch. Fine lines of poetry interspersed with political statements like "Defence of liberty is just, Arthur, but never a war of conquest," and occasionally an exciting story well told. Mr. Bridson made the mistake of trying to mix the historical Arthur who can only be an ambitious tribesman of primitive morality with the Arthur of Renaissance chivalry. Essentially one contradicts the other. If Mr. Bridson had stuck to his history he might have made a fine play, but of course the chivalric idea of monarchy would have suffered. By introducing the Mallory legends he certainly did flatter the aristocratic traditions of monarchy —at a time when such flattery was not uncommon—and spoiled his play.

* * *

It is reassuring to hear that the B.B.C. has just notified its staff that it does not propose to continue Clause 9 of the Staff Agreement which "prohibits any employee from publicly writing about or speaking about or discussing the B.B.C. or its affairs for the space of one year after the determination of the employee's service." Broadcasting House had not taken kindly to the implication that every employee is likely, on leaving the staff, to exploit his position for selfish or destructive ends. More mistaken is the notion contained in the agreement that the B.B.C. and its affairs are above criticism. The abrogation of this clause a month or so after its introduction indicates pretty strong feeling on the part of the staff.

The thorn of staff organisation is still pricking the sides of the B.B.C. Control Council. Over a year ago the Ullswater Committee strongly recommended some form of staff organisation against the B.B.C.'s opinion that existing methods were adequate. The Director of Staff Administration was told to inquire into methods of staff representation in other public and semi-public bodies and to bring forward suggestions for the B.B.C. It was recently announced that he had completed his researches into staff organisation in Government Departments, the L.C.C., P.L.A., etc. Unfortunately the B.B.C. entirely neglected the Committee's additional recommendation that trade union organisation might be considered. Disturbed by this unwelcome attitude Labour members of Parliament asked the P.M.G. whether he was aware that some 1,400 members of the B.B.C. staff were eligible for union membership and stated that union organisers had been refused admission to the staff. It remains to be seen how the Governors will square their own opinions with staff requirements in the fact of Government recommendations and strong Labour criticism.

* * *

New Co-Axial Cable

Television has opened its window on to London by means of the new cable specially constructed for viewing Coronation processions. There was already a co-axial cable as far as Birmingham, put in by the Post Office at a cost of £1,000 a mile, and capable of taking both television and ordinary sound transmissions. This new London cable is for television only and must have cost the B.B.C. a fabulous sum. It runs from Alexandra Palace in a loop taking in the centre of London and extending as far as Hyde Park Corner. At various points on the cable there are contacts where the line can be plugged in.

The television staff at Alexandra Palace has been rapidly expanding. There are now over 220 employees altogether. They are housed in 26 offices piled on top of each other to a height of five floors in the South-East tower. R. A. Rendell has gone over to the Palace as Assistant Director of Television from Broadcasting House. Mrs. Mary Adams has also come from head office to run Television talks. Dallas Bower, who has been responsible for the excellent revues televised recently, claims to have directed films and written a book about them. Stephen Thomas, in charge of television ballet, was once stage-director for Nigel Playfair and C. B. Cochran.

Recording Service For Short Films

A special recording service for short films has just been announced by British Acoustic Films. They will now undertake recording for independent producers on their full-range recording system.

Among the documentaries B.A.F. have recorded in the past are Paul Rotha's *Face of Britain* and Jack Holmes' *The Mine*.

The service will include post-synchronisation, the latest dubbing facilities, accommodation for the largest combinations and orchestras, and a well-equipped mobile unit. The men in charge are experts in shorts' technique.

B.B.C. Events

★Tuesday, June 1st, 8.15 p.m.: *The Purple Pileus*. Play, by H. G. Wells. Production: Gilliam. NATIONAL. 8.45 p.m.: Feature. *Triumph Over Time*. Production: Allen. REGIONAL.

★Wednesday, June 2nd, 2.45 p.m.: The Derby. Commentary from Epsom. NATIONAL. 8.15 p.m.: *Derby Day*, by A. P. Herbert. Production: McConnel. REGIONAL.

Friday, June 4th, 8 p.m.: Ronald Frankau's Revue. NATIONAL. 8.15 p.m.: London Musical Festival. Toscanini. REGIONAL.

Saturday, June 5th, 7.30 p.m.: *A.B.C.* Production: Hanson. NATIONAL

Sunday, June 6th, 5.35 p.m.: *Henry IV*, Part I. By Shakespeare. Production: Creswell. NATIONAL.

Wednesday, June 9th, 6.50 p.m.: *Youth at the Helm*. Play. Production: Allen. NATIONAL.

Friday, June 11th, 3.35 p.m.: Talk for Sixth Forms. Bernard Shaw. NATIONAL. 8 p.m. *Flying Dutchman*. From Covent Garden. REGIONAL.

★Saturday, June 12th, 8 p.m.: Feature. *Van Gogh*. Production: Morrow. REGIONAL. 10.5 p.m.: Aldershot Tattoo, massed bands. NATIONAL.

Monday, June 14th, 9.35 p.m.: *Record of a Birthday*. Play. Production: Sieveking. NATIONAL.

Tuesday, June 15th, 8.15 p.m.: Two Plays, *Atmospherics*, by Dunsany, and *Little Ena*, by Edwardes. Production: Felton. NATIONAL. ★9.30 p.m.: Boxing. Neusel v. Farr. Commentary. REGIONAL.

Wednesday, June 16th, 8.15 p.m.: *Tomorrow's Luck*. Musical comedy. Production: Campbell. REGIONAL.

Friday, June 18th, 8.15 p.m.: *Between Houses*. Variety from Manchester. NATIONAL.

★Saturday, June 19th, 7.30 p.m.: Feature. *Edinburgh Castle*. SCOT. REGIONAL.

★Sunday, June 20th, 9.5 p.m.: Feature. *London Calling* 1837. Production: Allen. NATIONAL.

Tuesday, June 22nd, 8 p.m.: *Mr. Barley's Abroad*. Musical Comedy. Production: Creswell. 10.15 p.m.: *National Six*. Play. Production: Burnham. NATIONAL.

Thursday, June 24th, 8 p.m.: *Don Juan de Manara*, Act 1. Goossens. REGIONAL. 9.20 p.m.: Folk Dance Programme. Production: Cheatle. NATIONAL.

Friday, June 25th, 8.30 p.m.: *The Silver Box*. Play by Galsworthy. Production: Burnham. REGIONAL.

Saturday, June 26th, 1.45 p.m.: Sports commentaries. Wimbledon (tennis), ★Lord's (1st Test Match), Hendon (Air Pageant), Hurlingham (Polo Championship). NATIONAL.

Tuesday, June 29th, 4.45 p.m.: Ryder Cup commentary. NATIONAL. 8.30 p.m.: *The Man in the Passage*. Play, by Chesterton. Production: Felton. REGIONAL.

Wednesday, June 30th, 8 p.m.: *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Play, by Dumas. Production: Creswell. NATIONAL.

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Film Producers Meet Scottish Teachers

A PUBLIC conference between educational film producers and Scottish teachers, members of the Scottish Educational Film Association, was held in Edinburgh on May 8th. Its aim on one side was to state what films were required in Scottish schools and on the other to discuss methods of supplying them.

The aim was sound but it was incompletely realised. Only one voice, that of the Director of Education for Glasgow, could speak with authority and responsibility, and say, as he did, "These are the films I am prepared to buy for Glasgow at this moment." For the rest the producers heard as many different views on the films required as there were speakers. Only at the end of the conference was it suggested that it would have been better for the teachers to get together first and decide on a common policy.

Once teachers were agreed on film requirements the next step would be, not to go direct to the producers, but to the Scottish Education Department, so that some official approval might be given to the programme. The producers have never received from any authoritative source a clear lead as to what is required in the schools. At the Edinburgh conference one trade representative after another demanded: "Do you know what you want? Tell us explicitly and we will meet your requirements."

The only explicit reply they received was from the Director of Education for Glasgow. The clarity of his list was welcome though the subjects requested reflected only the simplest illustrative function of the educational film. There was no hint of a progressive appreciation of the film's task in supplying a much needed contact between the educational system and the life of the community outside. The chairman emphasised, however, that the idea must not go out that Scotland wanted only films of cows in the farmyard and sheep in the meadow.

Post Mortem System

There was some criticism at the conference of the Scottish reviewing scheme for educational films, described by one speaker as a post mortem system which told the producer where he had gone wrong only when it was too late. The best defence came from a woman teacher who said that she could not see what more the producers wanted than the constructive comment offered on the reviewing forms. Unfortunately film producers were not like doctors, she said: they did not bury their failures. They kept foisting them on unsuspecting teachers who did not know they were failures until after they had shown them. In fact, they were dead but they would not lie down.

Experience in analysing the films, however, will eventually enable the teachers to give invaluable informed advice to the producers. At present they are following the Scottish practice of saying what they don't want, leaving the producers to deduce what they do.

The conference revealed two major problems facing the movement; a shortage of worthwhile educational films planned for teaching and the relatively small number of projectors installed in the schools. To some extent, the two are bound up, for, lacking an economic distribution, the producers cannot develop large-scale plans, and education authorities hesitate to equip schools with projectors until they are assured of a regular supply of worth-while films. It is the old vicious circle, the same one as has cropped up in every educational film investigation over the past twenty-five years.

An impartial observer would, I think, admit that the film producers have done more than their share to break it. Now it is the turn of the education authorities to do something.

FORSYTH HARDY

Review

HISTORY TEACHING FILM (British Film Institute).

The brochure begins with a useful survey of the results of experimentation here and in America, by which the value of the film in history teaching has been tested and proved. The rest of the book consists largely of *ex cathedra* recommendations, debatable in many instances, but informed with a liberal spirit which is extremely valuable, especially in this particular field.

In dealing with the technique of producing teaching films, the recommendations are pretty vague, amounting in some instances to counsels of perfection—the film should be accurate but not necessarily completely so—short but not too short, personal but not too personal, and so on. This uncertainty is inevitable because the technique of making history school-films has not yet been worked out. This booklet will be of value in working out this problem.

There are other reasons for the vagueness of recommendations on the presentation of "conventional" history—kings, battles, treaties, etc. One is that conventional history is extremely difficult to teach to children. In fact this brochure admits that it can't be taught to the very young at all, and that even the older pupils seldom succeed in grasping the time-scale of events.

The great value of these recommendations lies in the later pages; and the value is really great. Here, the view is put forward, or at least implied, that conventional history is completely false in emphasis, if not in fact, and the compilers see with rare vision that the film as a medium is ideal for presenting those histories which are largely neglected in books, and scarcely taught at all in schools—the history of contemporary events, (the brochure actually cites the *March of Time*, for which alone it deserves a medal), the history of common living conditions, of crafts and skills, arts, methods of transport, industrial processes, in short the history of work and play throughout the ages. It is very interesting to see how the compilers become practical in their recommendations as soon as they reach these matters, and how enthusiasm sparkles in their pages and finds expression in leaded type. Their recommendations for illustrating text-book history show a constant hesitancy and lack of confidence—and no wonder, for text-book history is a no-man's land for any clear-thinking educator. But having left this domain behind, with a sigh of relief one may fancy, the compilers launch forth in an enthusiastic and very useful sketch of the wider possibilities. Here are the concluding recommendations:—

"We would recommend, therefore, the following as types of teaching films with which experiments should first be made:

1. Social life at various periods.
2. Cartoon maps and diagrams illustrating a movement.
3. History of some one craft.
4. History of transport, e.g. wheeled transport.
5. The development of costume, arms and armour.
6. History of ships, with diagrams.
7. Industrial Revolution as shown in one industry.
8. Agrarian Revolution.
9. Early discoverers and their difficulties.
10. Expansion of the British Empire.
11. History of the League of Nations.
12. Roads and rivers of England, and their influence on her historical and economic development, and films dealing with stages where history and geography impinge upon one another."

R.F.

Powerful New Circuit

Immediate release of new films following their West End presentations has been brought appreciably nearer by a deal which will bring some 250 up-to-date cinemas under one control.

This new circuit will come into being as a result of the acquisition by Odeon Theatres Ltd. of a controlling interest in Entertainments and General Investments Corporation Ltd., the company which, among others, runs two important cinema circuits, County Cinemas and Associated Theatres. The total value of the theatres concerned is 15 million pounds.

Mr. Oscar Deutsch, Chairman and Managing Director of Odeon Theatres Ltd., has joined the Boards of Directors of Entertainments and General Investments Corporation and County Cinemas, whilst Mr. C. J. Donada continues as Managing Director of the County Cinemas group under a long term agreement. Mr. Ralph S. Bromhead has been elected to the Board of Entertainments and General Investments Corporation Ltd. and County Cinemas of which he will continue to act as general manager, likewise under a long term contract agreement.

Under the direction of Mr. Deutsch and Mr. Donada, and with the active co-operation of United Artists Corporation Ltd., the international distributing organisation, the combined groups aim to secure the release of films booked to their theatres immediately after the West End showing. The first important move in this direction will take place in the early Autumn when the forthcoming Marlene Dietrich-Robert Donat film, *Knight without Armour*, opens at the new Odeon Theatre in Leicester Square.

Of the 250 theatres of the combined Odeon-County-Associated groups many occupy key positions in the big cities and towns, and the vast majority are modern super cinemas built within the last two or three years and with a huge aggregate seating capacity. Further additions to the new circuit will be made when the new Odeon Theatres now under construction are completed.

It is estimated that the policy of immediate release throughout the provinces will have the effect of increasing average weekly attendances in this country by several millions. In this connection it is pointed out that whilst in the United States weekly attendances average 80 millions out of a total population of 110 millions, attendances in Great Britain average only 18½ millions out of a population of 45 millions.

FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gaspar-color).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal
BENSHAM: Palladium — June 7, 3 days
CARLISLE: Star — June 21, 3 days
COCKERMOUTH: Grand — June 7, 3 days
EASINGTON: Empire — June 24, 3 days
GUISELEY: Picture House — June 17, 3 days
MORDEN: Electric — June 28, 3 days
PORTLAND: Regal — June 14, 3 days
RUTHIN: Picture House — June 24, 3 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinema — June 3, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Curzon, Offerton — June 14, 6 days

And So to Work (A comedy of early morning rising).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Richard Massingham
ALLOA: Central — June 24, 3 days
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE: Picture House, Jesmond — June 3, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: News House — June 24, 3 days
TIBSHELF: Palace — June 10, 3 days

The Birthplace of America (British origins of American pioneers).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION: A. Moncrieff Davidson
ARMLEY: Pictodrome — June 14, 3 days
BAWTRY: Palace — June 14, 2 days
BRISTOL: Knowle — June 24, 3 days
CHORLTON-CUM-HARDY: Rivoli — June 24, 3 days
DARLESTON: Picturedrome — June 21, 3 days
ECCLESHALL: Greystones — June 3, 3 days
HULL: Londesboro' — June 17, 3 days
LEEDS: Imperial — June 24, 3 days
Shaftesbury — June 10, 3 days
MIDDLETON: Palace — June 28, 3 days
NEWCASTLE: Picture Palace — June 9, 2 days
PRESTON: Palladium — June 21, 6 days
ROCHDALE: Ceylon — June 21, 3 days
Coliseum — June 24, 3 days
TOTTINGTON: Palace — June 17, 3 days

Coal Face (Poetic treatment of coal mining).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit
SOUND PRODUCTION: Alberto Cavalcanti
ALEXANDRIA: Strand — June 3, 3 days
GOLBORNE: Royal Pavilion — June 10, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Chantry — June 17, 3 days
THURCROFT: Cinema — June 7, 3 days
TOWYN: Cinema — June 7, 3 days
WORTHING: Dome — June 21, 6 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw
ASHTON-UNDER-LYME: Pavilion — June 10, 3 days
BARNSTAPLE: Gaumont Palace — June 21, 3 days
CHEADLE HULME: Elysian — June 17, 3 days
EASINGTON: Empire — June 17, 3 days
GATESHEAD: Ravensworth — June 24, 3 days
HAWORTH: Hippodrome — June 28, 3 days
HILLSBORO: Kinema — June 21, 6 days
HUDDERSFIELD: Waterloo — June 10, 3 days
LEEDS: Abbey — June 3, 3 days
PUDSEY: Picture House — June 7, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Park — June 3, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Curzon, Offerton — June 14, 6 days
TEIGNMOUTH: Riviera — June 7, 3 days
WIGTON: Palace — June 21, 3 days

Dragon of Wales (A travelogue attempting to tackle economic conditions).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: W. B. Pollard
HULL: Carlton — June 17, 3 days
National — June 7, 3 days
Playhouse — June 24, 3 days
Savoy — June 14, 3 days
NEWPORT: Cinema — June 14, 6 days

Fire Fighters (Documentary of the London Fire Brigade).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Peter Colin
DEAL: Odeon — June 28, 6 days
GLASGOW: Picture House, Sauchiehall Street — June 28, 6 days
NOTTINGHAM: News House — June 17, 3 days
RICHMOND: Richmond Theatre — June 1, 6 days
TIBSHELF: Palace — June 21, 3 days
TORQUAY: Electric — June 7, 6 days

Fishing Banks of Skye
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit
GREENWICH: Trafalgar — June 12, 1 day
HOYLAKE: Winter Gardens — June 14, 3 days
LITTLE SUTTON: Kings — June 17, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Park Palace — June 3, 3 days
RAINHAM: Royal — June 10, 3 days

Gentlemen in Top Hats and Gentlemen in Crowns (Historical survey of European events for the past 40 years).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: A. B. Svensk Filmindustri
ENGLISH VERSION: Donald Taylor
COVENTRY: Gaumont Palace — June 27, 1 day
OXFORD: Scala — June 21, 3 days
TWICKENHAM: Twickenham Theatre — June 1, 6 days

How to be a Detective (In the Benchley manner).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION and DIRECTION: Robert Benchley
LONDON: Tatler, Charing Cross Road — June 7, 6 days

Key to Scotland (Documentary of Edinburgh).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Marion Grierson
CHESTER: Tatler — June 21, 6 days
DUNDEE: Vogue — June 24, 3 days
HULL: National — June 3, 3 days
NORTHWICH: Plaza — June 28, 6 days

Men Against the Sea (Documentary of North Sea trawling).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Vernon Sewell
BRIERFIELD: New Star — June 3, 3 days
CORBY: Odeon — June 21, 3 days
DIDSBURY: Capitol — June 7, 6 days

Milestones (The varying types to be seen in England).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION: A. Moncrieff Davidson
ARMLEY: Western — June 30, 1 day
BACUP: Regal — June 14, 3 days
BAWTRY: Palace — June 18, 2 days
BIRKENHEAD: Plaza — June 21, 6 days
BRISTOL: Knowle — June 7, 3 days
BUCKHAVEN: Globe — June 9, 2 days
CARCROFT: Picture Palace — June 25, 2 days
DARLINGTON: Plaza — June 17, 3 days
GOLDTHORPE: Empire — June 17, 3 days
HILLSBORO: Phoenix — June 21, 3 days
HYDE: Queens — June 14, 3 days
MIDDLETON: Palace — June 14, 3 days
NORTH WALSHAM: Regal — June 7, 3 days
PRESTON: Empress — June 9, 4 days
RIPLEY: Empire — June 21, 3 days
SCARBOROUGH: Londesboro' — June 14, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Norfolk — June 24, 3 days
Wicker — June 21, 6 days
SELBY: Central — June 17, 3 days
THURNSCOE: Cinema — June 21, 3 days
WIGAN: Princes — June 14, 6 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright and Harry Watt
BIRMINGHAM: Triangle — June 24, 3 days
GRASSMOOR: Electric — June 24, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Greenhill, Cheetham Hill — June 24, 3 days
MOTTRAM: Savoy — June 17, 3 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street — June 21, 3 days
OKEHAMPTON: Cinema — June 7, 3 days
OLDHAM: Alhambra — June 3, 3 days
RAINHAM: Royal — June 3, 3 days
SACRISTON: Memorial — June 27, 1 day
SHEFFIELD: Greystone — June 10, 3 days
Manor — June 3, 3 days
WHITTINGTON MOOR: Lyceum — June 7, 3 days
WHITWICK: Palace — June 17, 3 days

Secret Hiding Places (Priest holes to be found in English country houses).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Granville Squiers
BOURNEMOUTH: Premier News Theatre — June 21, 3 days
GLASGOW: Kingsway — June 24, 3 days
GOOLE: Tower — June 10, 3 days
HULL: National — June 17, 3 days
LEEDS: Regal, Crossgates — June 24, 3 days
LONDON: Annexe, Islington — June 17, 3 days
Cinema, Canning Town — June 10, 3 days
ROCHDALE: Coliseum — June 14, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Globe, Attercliffe — June 3, 3 days
Hillsboro' Park Cinema — June 17, 3 days

Statue Parade (Historical treatment of London statues).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
LONDON: Tatler, Charing Cross Road — June 7, 6 days

Vanishing Sails (Story of the Medway sailing barge).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Steuart Films
DIRECTION: Ronald Steuart
DORCHESTER: Palace — June 13, 1 day
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews — June 3, 3 days

Foreign Films

Der Ammenkoenig (German).
DIRECTION: Hans Steinhoff
LONDON: Studio One, Oxford Street — June 1, indefinitely

Burgtheater (Austrian).
SCENARIO and DIRECTION: Willi Forst
STARRING: Werner Krauss
Olga Tschechowa
LONDON: Academy, Oxford Street — June 1, indefinitely

En Natt (Swedish).
DISTRIBUTION: Sound City
OXFORD: Scala — June 7, 3 days

L'Equipage (French).
DIRECTION: Anatole Litvak
STARRING: Annabella
Jean Murat
LONDON: Studio One, Oxford Street — Following *Der Ammenkoenig*

Fear (Finnish).
DISTRIBUTION: National Provincial
DIRECTION: Stefan Zweig
OXFORD: Scala — June 10, 3 days

The Golem (Czechoslovakian).
DIRECTION: Julien Duvivier
STARRING: Jean Gabin
LONDON: Forum, Villiers Street — June 1, indefinitely

De Kribbebijter (Dutch).
DISTRIBUTION: Tobis
PRODUCTION: Holfi-Film
DIRECTION: Hermann Kosterlitz
Ernst Winar
STARRING: Louis Borel
OXFORD: Scala — June 14, 3 days

Musik im Blut (German).
DISTRIBUTION: Tobis
OXFORD: Scala — June 3, 3 days

Pépé le Moko (French).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: Julien Duvivier
STARRING: Jean Gabin
LONDON: Curzon — June 1, indefinitely

Thunder Over Mexico (American).
DISTRIBUTION: International
DIRECTION: S. M. Eisenstein
OXFORD: Scala — June 17, 3 days

world FILM news

AMATEUR AND TECHNICAL SECTION

An Illustration of dramatic lighting from a Columbia Picture.

£230 FOR AMATEUR SERVICE CLUB

THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORLD

HOW TO DESIGN AND BUILD SETS

CONTRIBUTORS

Andrew Buchanan
Evelyn Spice
Lionel H. Huitt
H. Chevalier

FILMING BRITAIN—No. 2.

The Holiday Theme—Two Methods

By Evelyn Spice

ANY slice of Britain might form a background for a film about a holiday group, bent on seeing new places and leaving the cities for the countryside.

There are many ways in which we might plan a film of that kind. But here I shall outline just two of the many:

(1) The impressionistic method, covering much ground and presenting many people.

(2) The personal story, using a family or a group of friends and presenting them in story form against a countryside background.

The Impressionist Method: Let us suppose, for this film story, that it is a typical holiday week-end in London (or any other city for that matter). It is Saturday morning. At noon the great rush for the trains begins. Here the people, hurrying to catch a train, might be increased in numbers, in successive shots, until long queues are revealed. Engines, in a row, puff out smoke. Tickets are torn off large reels. Queues move forward. More people arrive, families, children, young couples.

Behind the scenes the ticket men and porters change duties, have a hurried cup of tea, etc., etc. On telephones extra coaches are ordered. Everywhere there is bustle and everywhere people are tried almost to the breaking point with excitement, tiredness, and the worry of getting away from town with the dog, the family, and themselves, all intact.

Nerve-strain and Music

This part of the film must be played up to a great pitch of nervous tension. If sound is used the effect of strain on the nerves could be intensified by the use of music, or noise and din, and people trying to talk over the noise.

We have the tension worked up then, by such shots as a lost ticket and frantic telephone calls (which might make a small episode threaded through the departure sequence to heighten the tension), the lost dog, four people going from coach to coach trying to find four seats together, a man fumbling in his many pockets for his ticket, while other people wait restlessly behind him. This sequence might well end with the arrival of someone with the forgotten ticket just as the train begins to shunt out of the station.

The train moves out. This should be done to give a gradual easing of the tension, with rather a long shot, beginning slowly and quickening.

Faces out of the window as the coaches pass, people smile as they flash by, hands are waved. Chimneys and housetops flash past. The smoke of the city is left behind in three or four shots taken from the train, rooftops, a little bit of suburbia with a green spot here and there, open fields, a farmstead, green trees and grass everywhere.

People settle down to reading, watching the scenery, sorting their parcels, etc.

A cut from a person in the train to an animal in a farmyard gets us from the train to the country. From people having lunch, perhaps, to feeding-time on a farm. Here, since we are showing many places, and many people, is our opportunity to present part of the West of England, maybe, or any part of the country we choose. Six of the places in the west country, where people might go for holiday, would be quite enough. A farm in the hills, the city children among the animals. A Londoner spending a day in Oxford. Young people enjoying a week-end riding in the hills near Gloucester. Children picking daffodils in the woods, etc., etc., and finally, the sea. Just half a dozen shots of each spot, balancing them nicely so that at no time does the sequence tend to become a whole film about farming, riding, seasides, etc. Until the final sequence which, since it is to be the final one of the film, may be a bit longer, with longer shots, to slow up the movement a bit, and prepare the audience for the end of the film.

Second Method

A More Personal Story. The second method is a more personal one. In it we must have a group of people who are our stars. Their story is the story of thousands of other holiday makers. Through them we want to convey the story as it might well happen to any of the thousands. As a background for them we use the station and later the countryside.

At the station there are crowds. But this time the camera discovers our people working their way through the throngs. They have trouble with the dog who doesn't want to be put into the baggage car. They finally find their seats after a lot of hurry and excitement.

The train moves off. This time the relief of actually being on their way, could be shown in the faces and attitude of the four people. Their gladness at getting into the country could be shown through the child.

The other people in the car are their immediate background and are shown in relation to our family or group. We spend more time on the train this time than in the previous film, because we want to introduce our people in close-ups to the audience, and make them interesting.

The countryside is seen from the train window. We reveal the passing scenery until we finally draw in at a station, with a shot taken from our travellers' viewpoint.

It is a small station, perhaps. There is someone to meet us. The train pulls away and goes off into the hills.

Here we have a choice of location for our people. They may stop at a village, a farm, the seaside. Since it is their story, we cannot very well go away and leave them while we roam about giving an impression of the whole countryside. We must present, through a local spot, something of the life which might go on anywhere in that part of the country.

The family, or group of friends, is the medium through which we reveal the life of the country people. If in a village, there are people there to get to know, and farms near by, fair days, no doubt, and the annual fête. If on a farm, there will be the local market day in the village nearby. If at the seaside, there are, if we want to wander a bit, small villages, and farms within a mile or so of the sea.

We might end the film in a dozen ways, from night falling over the countryside, to the small child of the party going to bed in a farm-house bedroom, while outside under the window an animal rubs itself against the gate.

Kodachrome in Daylight

IN a letter printed last month, Mr. J. Masterton states: "When using Kodachrome in daylight it is inadvisable to use anything but flat lighting, as it is difficult to match shadows. In any shot on Kodachrome where there are heavy shadows, I have found they have a definite tendency to blue."

Well, this is not the first time I have had the same complaint about heavy shadows tending to blue on Kodachrome. But I'm sorry I cannot agree with "only using flat lighting," for one is so limited in choice of subject. Last month, I advocated the use of a haze filter to reduce the tendency to bluish shadows in various types of scenes. At the time of writing those notes, I had not read Mr. Masterton's letter, or I should have added a fifth use for the haze filter. Number Five would then read:—"to prevent an excess of blue in shadows, when scenes must be made in the shade."

The haze filter is extremely helpful in colour work and will allow latitude for contrast lighting. A haze filter is in fact an ultra-violet absorbing filter, and does not affect good resolution. It is helpful to remember the speed of Kodachrome is high, requiring a lens aperture of about one stop more than with ordinary panchromatic and two stops more than Super-Pan. Under bright summer conditions, the most useful lens stops are f. 8 and f. 5.6.

H. Chevalier.

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£230 for Amateur Film Makers

Amateur Service Club—First Group of Films for Production

THIS month we begin the great work of turning our amateur skill to good uses. There are a thousand causes to serve and we can do much for them. There are children's movements, youth movements and social movements of all kinds which require the helping hand of publicity. By making films on housing and health and town planning and activities of local government and the work of local research stations or local hospitals, we can further civic education on a nation-wide scale.

With a dozen professional film directors pledged to help every amateur who co-operates, there is no reason why this Amateur Services movement—with its vision of cinema in the service of the community—should not become a great national movement.

Money will not be the drawback it once seemed. Sponsors of all kinds are ready to give financial encouragement. Our Amateur Services Club in conjunction with WORLD FILM NEWS is mobilising it.

Amateurs have only to use the great opportunity which it presents to them. Here is a first list of awards open to amateurs.

The Films

The Orient Line offers £50 for the best film of an ORIENT CRUISE made during the coming season.

★

The Gas, Light & Coke Company offer £20, £15 and £10 for films on PREVENTIVE HYGIENE or on THE PLANNED HOME.

★

Shell-Mex & B.P. Ltd. offer £20, £15 and £10 for films on THE BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE, and direct the attention of amateur script makers to their nine brilliant guides to the English countryside.

WORLD FILM NEWS, to do a turn for the cause represented by the Travel Association and the preservation work of the Office of Works, offer £20, £15 and £10 for films describing Britain's rich TREASURES OF ARCHITECTURE. Let us have fine records of the cathedrals and castles and homes of the country, done with knowledge and skill. Amateurs with their high standard of photography and their more studious minds, will surely do this sort of thing better than professionals.

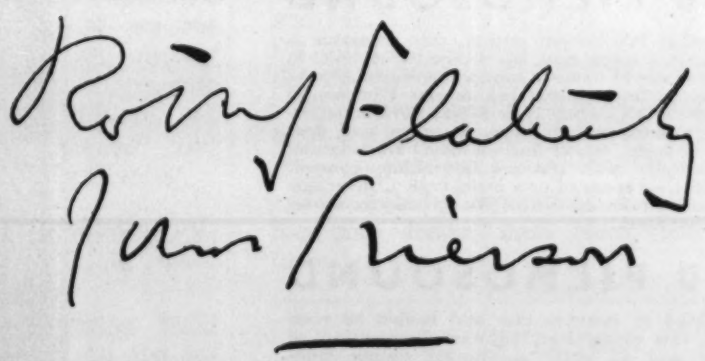
★

WORLD FILM NEWS also offers £20, £15 and £10 for films of the YOUTH HOSTEL MOVEMENT in Scotland. This is to help a fine cause which has not the funds available for all the publicity it deserves. WORLD FILM NEWS is, moreover, glad to do this service to its country of origin and to the many first-rate amateur film makers north of the border.

So far, then, £230. There will be a great deal more before we are finished.

Let us, therefore, make a quick start. We want amateurs all over the country—and many have already proved their skill—to join us in the most progressive and practical movement in amateur cinema.

The Amateur Service Club was founded and is sponsored by:



The A.S.C. has been created to give professional aid on scripts, camera-work and production to all amateurs making films of a documentary or social character.

Miss Evelyn Spice (Director of *Weather Forecast* and *Calendar of the Year*) has been appointed organising secretary and chief adviser.

Andrew Buchanan (creator of Cinemagazine), Paul Rotha (producer and author of *The Film Till Now* and *The Documentary Film*), and Basil Wright (director of *The Song of Ceylon*) have been appointed as additional advisers.

***Write to*:**
Evelyn Spice, Amateur Service Club, Oxford House, Oxford Street, London, W.1.

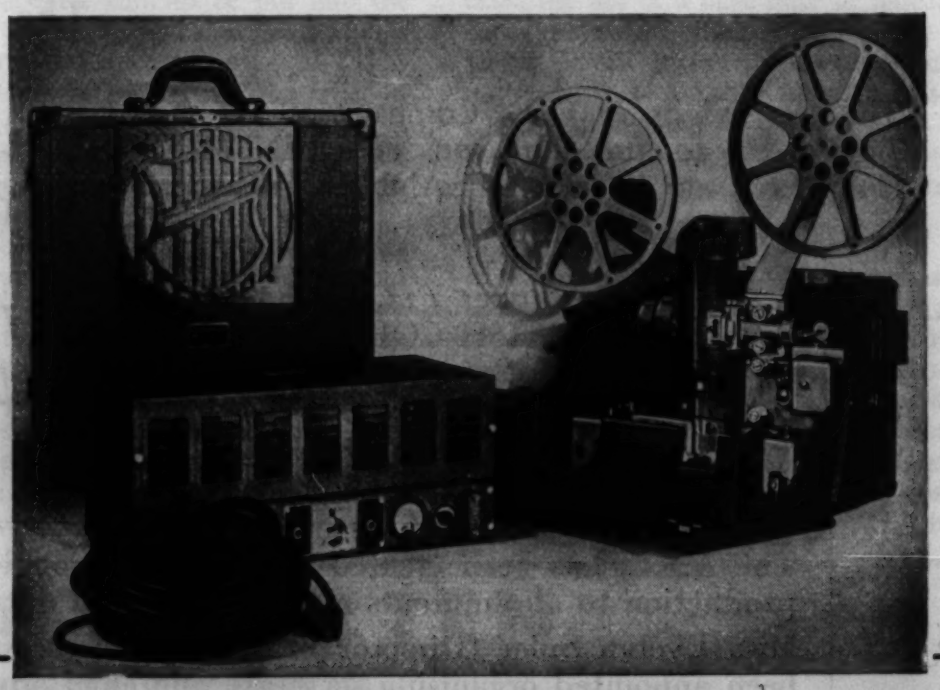
THE ADVANTAGES OF NEW TOOLS

THE good workman never blames his tools, so they say. Why has this always been true?—because the good worker is a wise man and doesn't tolerate old tools when they can be replaced by new ones which will save time or money, and improve quality. Throughout the world, modern industry is progressing by adopting effective new tools. Such a tool is the Filmosound—leader in its class of talkie apparatus and the ideal instrument for use in the School, Lecture Room, Hall, Sales Office or the Home.

FILMOSOUND

MODEL 130 WITH 1000 WATT PROJECTION LAMP AND 25 WATT AMPLIFIER

This 16 mm. equipment permits fully professional presentations of sound film subjects of any number of reels and employs either one or two 1000-watt Filmo Projectors. Illuminating power exceeds that of any other 16 mm. projector. 1600-ft. film capacity allows 45 minutes show. May be operated at 24 or 16 frames per second (for sound and silent films). Film take-up is by a separate motor, which also provides power for rapid film rewinding. Fitted with fast 2-inch F 1.65 lens instantly interchangeable with special lenses. Film is cooled and re-humidified. There is a radio interference eliminator, pilot light, snubber to cushion film against take-up tension, two-way tilt, variable lamp resistance and voltmeter. The amplifier is a high fidelity reproducing unit, with high power output, normally 25 watts, with peaks reaching a value of 75 watts. Thus great sound volume is available without a trace of distortion. Nine shielded tubes of latest type are used in amplifier and one in speaker case. Control of Filmosound 130, whether used with one or two projectors, is from amplifier control panel. Provision made for starting and stopping either projector, and for quick change-over of sound and picture from one projector to the other. Line voltage, film sound volume, microphone volume, and tone are also controlled from this panel.



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Other Filmosound Models

★

138 FILMOSOUND

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120 FILMOSOUND

Contained in carrying case and having its own blimp, this model has 750 watt illumination of picture and 18 watts undistorted output from powerful amplifier. Perfect co-ordination of picture and sound. Electric governor ensures constant speed. Gives talkies for an audience as large as 2,000.

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AMATEUR CLUB AND FILM SOCIETY NEWS

ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, Howard Cricks, Esq., 35 Russell Square, W.C.1.

The Committee and Sub-committees of the Kinematograph Section are engaged on a number of developments. A Federation of Amateur Producing Societies has been formed, further particulars of which will soon be published.

Another Sub-committee is busy on arrangements for the Exhibition of Kinematography and the concurrent Film Competition, to be held in November. For the first time, the Competition will probably include a class for 35 mm. films.

THE DARTINGTON HALL FILM UNIT has begun work on three new educational films. An animated film on *Springs and Wells*, a film on the British Timber Industry, and a film on Pastoral Nomadism, based on material from the Russian film *Turksib*. A unit is going to Norway in the summer, where it will obtain material for films on the village life of the fjords, for the timber film, and for a film on the natural regions and human geography of Norway. Most of these films will be available for distribution through Visual Education between September and December. Their productions last year in Derbyshire and the Canary Islands have been purchased by the L.C.C. and the Glasgow Education Committee. Film Officer, William Hunter, The School, Dartington Hall, Totnes, S. Devon.

ELTHAM CINE SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, Miss V. D. White, 36 Craigton Road, S.E.19.

The Society is now in its third year, and recently celebrated its second birthday by a gala performance in its miniature theatre at the studio. Various celebrities in the film world, and representatives from London amateur film clubs, were in attendance.

During its two years of existence, the Eltham Cine Society has produced some fourteen films, both short and full-length.

Work has now commenced on the Society's new production, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, in sound and natural colour. It will not be completed until after the summer.

ACE MOVIES: Hon. Secretary, Channon Wood, Esq., 15 Openview, S.W.18. Studio, 90 High Street Mews, Wimbledon, S.W.19.

Stacks of timber, linoleum and three-ply, bags of plaster, cans of paint, rolls of paper; all these, almost blocking access to the studio, indicate activity within the Ace camp. The first set for the mystery production is under construction. It is a cathedral interior, and according to Art Director Fowler, is in the rococo style of architecture. The construction department would have preferred a Methodist Chapel in the later corrugated style, but—Art must be served.

The cast is not yet finally selected, Director West having had some difficulty over types. There appears to be a vacancy for a male juvenile lead—handsome and slightly sunburned—and any aspirant to film fame who feels he complies with these conditions should get in touch with the secretary at once. The sunburn can, if necessary, be supplied.

Ace Movies would like to state that these monthly notes in the *World Film News* are bringing in more enquiries—and from the right sort of people—than any two other papers devoting similar space to Amateur production.

FILM AND PHOTO LEAGUE: Hon. Secretary, H. Cuthbertson, Esq., 3 Somerset Terrace, London, W.C.1.

On May 3rd, Arthur Elton, of Associated Realist Film Producers, spoke on "Film-making." "The first object of your film," he said, "is to tell a story: do not be lyrical. Make films of things you understand and let your film have a purpose." Mr. Elton went on to say that the intelligent use of a cine camera can be mastered in a very short time, and the advent of sound need not be witheld much longer from the practice of sub-standard cinematography.

Many of these points were well illustrated by the projection of *City Life of New York*, a film in Kodachrome colour, and the lecturer's own documentary *Housing Problems*.

A lengthy discussion on sound-recording, film-emulsions and other technical problems followed, the audience taking part.

In moving a vote of thanks, the Chairman spoke of the great scope before the League in the building up of a "Left Film Front" through the co-ordination of amateur efforts all over the country. The League's latest film *March Against Starvation* is worthy of a place among documentary film achievements. A film of *May Day*, against the background of contemporary national and international events, is now in production, for June release.

WOLVERHAMPTON FILM SOCIETY: Programme Secretary, E. L. Packer, Esq., Himley Crescent, Wolverhampton. Membership Secretary, Miss D. Roston, 60 Great Brickkiln Street, Wolverhampton.

The Society has just completed its second year with a slightly adverse balance sheet. As this is apparently quite common in the early stages of a Society's development, the Committee are not pessimistic about the future, but are already making plans for next season. Final programme in March consisted of *Mediæval Village*, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, *Remous*, and *L'Hippocampe*. The next meeting is in October.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, R. Cordwell, 13 Milwain Drive, Heaton Chapel, Nr. Manchester.

This Society was formed at Milton Hall, Manchester, on May 6th, following the dissolution of the Manchester and Salford Workers' Film Society. The latter had suffered a loss of £21, and were not in a position to carry on—but recommended that efforts should be made to re-establish a Film Society in Manchester, and that all their material, knowledge and assistance would be placed at the disposal of any new Society that might be formed.

Since its formation in 1930, the Manchester and Salford Workers' Film Society has given some 45 programmes, showing films representative of 13 countries.

A successful inaugural meeting launched the new Society. £20 was immediately forthcoming by guarantors, and several subscriptions paid in advance.

INVERNESS FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, John Mitchell, Esq., Royal Bank Buildings, Inverness.

World Film News learns with regret that owing to inadequate public support of this Society, the question of dissolution is being considered.

BRIGHTON, HOVE AND DISTRICT FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY (Branch of the British Film Institute): Hon. Secretary, C. Walker, "Eskdale," Old Shoreham Road, Southwick, Sussex.

The first film show of the season took place at the Theatre Royal on May 23rd. The programme was headed by *Remous*, French drama directed by Edmond Greville, starring Jean Galland and Jeanne Boitel, and distributed by Denning. Pending upon the success of this show will be the decision to carry on monthly shows of a similar nature throughout the winter season.

OXFORD FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, E. F. Bowtell, 105 Victoria Road, Oxford.

Fritz Lang's *Fury* was shown at the first meeting of the Summer season, held on Sunday, May 2nd, at the Scala Cinema. In support were Robert Benchley's *How to Behave*, and Anstey's *Enough to Eat?*—an examination into the problem of malnutrition among the working classes of this country.

At the meeting on May 23rd, Pudovkin's *The Deserter* was supported by *Papageno*—a Lotte Reiniger silhouette film. June 6th, *Der Schimmelreiter* will be presented, together with another Benchley comedy, *How to Vote*, and Massingham's *And So to Work*, described in the April issue of *W.F.N.*

WEST ESSEX FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, F. J. Philpott, 7 Wellington Road, East Ham, E.6.

A number of scenarios submitted by members were considered at the April monthly meeting, and Mr. S. Reed's *The Pot of Basil* was selected for the next production, shooting of which is shortly to commence.

At a recent meeting, Mr. Ternouth of Messrs. Kodak, Ltd., gave an address on "Kodachrome," illustrated by stills.

The lighting equipment at the studio, 41a Kempton Road, East Ham, E.6., has been increased to 15,000 watts.

A Letter

If you know of any amateurs who are making or thinking of making a pacifist film on the lines suggested in Andrew Buchanan's article in the April *W.F.N.*—or for that matter on any lines, so long as its aim is to promote peace, please would you let me know. I am a member of the Peace Pledge Union, and it may be possible to co-operate in trying to give public performances of pacifist-films in Town or Church Halls.

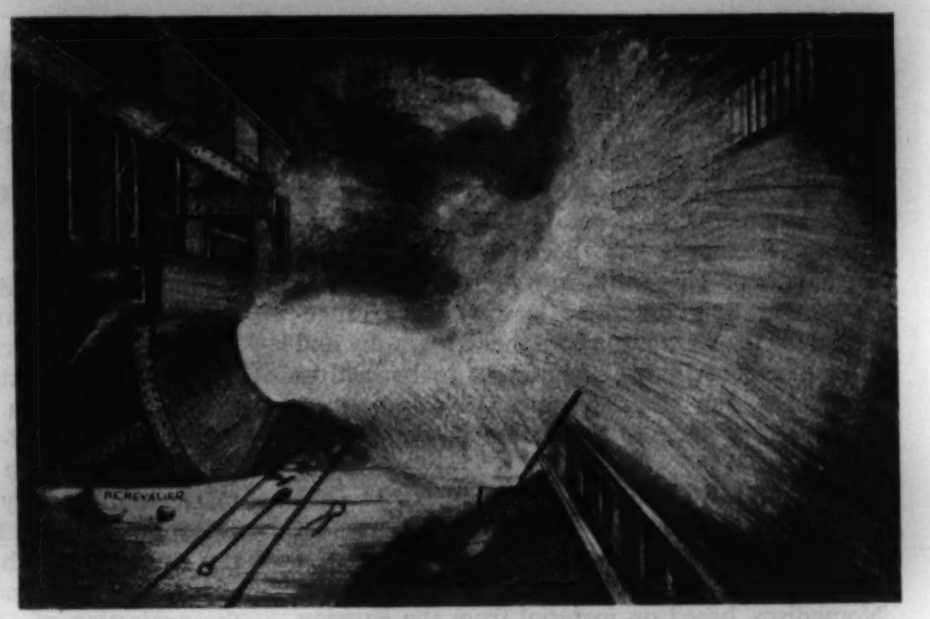
Finally, may I express my appreciation of *W.F.N.*—it is the only paper I know which has as its *raison d'être* one subject (film), but holds an intelligent attitude towards, and even gives space to, other subjects (broadcasting, music, etc.).

I. W. BRADBERY

HOW TO DESIGN AND BUILD SETS

By H. Chevalier,
F.P.S., A.S.E.

This is the first of a unique series of articles on set-building by a film journalist who has had considerable experience of practical studio work



A. Sketch showing the inside of a steel-mill during the blowing of the pot, and part of the explosion

SINCE launching my technical notes, I have given considerable thought to the many problems confronting amateur cinematographers. From observations of the technique employed in production of substandard films, one point requiring attention stands out with remarkable clarity—"Settings."

Badly designed or haphazardly constructed sets predominate in amateur films. Floating columns or pillars cheated about the set show only too well how little is known in amateur circles about the science of cinematography.

Starting from this basis, it will be my endeavour to guide you in the preparation of correctly designed settings, suitable to the action of a selected movie plot. At the moment, with armaments the predominating feature of the workaday world, a plot has been written around "Sabotage in Steel."

THE STORY IN BRIEF

The action is grouped around the plot to wreck a large steel works by an unknown agency. The scene opens in the kitchen of a dilapidated house in a midland town. Continues in the steel works when an explosion occurs while the molten steel is being poured into the moulds. Fire breaks out following the explosion, the action then taking place behind the pall of smoke and burning buildings.

Then a meeting in the alley—the man who resisted and what happened to him. The final meeting and exposure in the kitchen of the broken-down house.

Thus we require four settings designed to allow the dramatic action full play: (1) An interior of the kitchen; (2) Interior of a steel mill with hot metal being poured into moulds; (3) A sinister alley-way exterior; (4) A fire setting.

Our predominating problem is the production of the spectacular scenes, divided into three sections, viz: Pouring molten metal; Explosion during that operation; The subsequent fire. On the first examination, all three appear beyond the limits of both pocket and camera. You may quite rightly say, "We cannot afford to build large sets to produce the desired effect, or shoot the atmosphere shots of a steel mill in action."

Use of models

Naturally, but if you find it impossible to shoot the interiors in a steel mill itself, you can proceed on the same lines as the studios and fake the shots by using models. To build models we require drawings, so our procedure is to sketch the scene in detail, exactly how we imagine it would appear when the action takes place. Basing our ideas on authentic material, we sketch a steel mill, when they are "blowing a 25 ton heat of steel," a scene allowing plenty of background for our dramatic action. From sketch A, one can see how spectacular it will appear, and our next step is the preparation of a scale drawing and from the drawing, our model. The model shown in B is built to a given perspective, in other words the model is not an accurate reproduction of the authentic mill, but built to give the required camera angle. A 1/8th scale is employed, the materials consisting of odd pieces of three-ply zinc and deal. If the main girders of the steel mill are 20 ft. high, the model will be 1ft. 3in. high by 3ft. 6in. at the wide end, and 10in. wide at the narrow end.

To assist the photographic qualities, the scene is painted in shades of grey, using black only for shadows that cannot otherwise be obtained. A low camera angle is selected and the lighting carefully arranged on the right hand side of the model to give a scene approximating closely Sketch A minus the scattering of molten metal. Touch up any high lights with very light grey, almost white, and we are all set. Inside the crucible or metal pot we then place two sticks of Golden Rain firecracker, and as there is no bottom to the pot, we can adjust them carefully to give the desired effect without appearing in the picture.

Ready to shoot

We are now ready to shoot, but first set the camera speed to 32 pictures, p.s., and load with Super Sensitive Pan. Then light the fuses and run the camera until the firecracker gives out. Rewind the film, set off two more firecrackers and expose the film a second time to give greater effect of authenticity, but exposing at one stop less.

While the second or double exposure is being made two flash bombs previously placed in the pits marked F are ignited by tapers from below the model, which is set across a couple of trestles. The flash bombs produce the necessary explosion, timed exactly as required, and the first two spectacles are completed. If one desires a touch of added realism, a couple of lead toy figures can be added in the foreground when they will appear in silhouette, but don't forget to pull them over backwards by thin pieces of black thread when the explosion occurs. For the fire setting, we "revamp" or rebuild the model in the following manner. Cut out the centre portion of the right hand wall jaggedly with a penknife or chisel, leaving plenty of splintery bits sticking out from each side. Move the camera around to a point opposite the opening, subsequently arranging the lighting that, while correctly illuminating the model, will leave this wall in black shadow painting the wall black if necessary.

Then cover the opening on the outside with a piece of thick black paper that has been scored with a razor blade down either side about one inch from the edge. Fasten the paper to the wall securely by means of two strips of wood lath and also fasten a piece of thin twine to the top centre edge of the paper with strips of gummed paper. When ready to shoot set another flash bomb in the pit nearest the wall, then carefully sprinkle the wood representing the girders, etc., with petrol, using it very sparingly.

When all set, light the fuse on the flash bomb and the instant the flash occurs, pull the string ripping the paper completely out of the opening, at the same time igniting the petrol with a long taper. Shoot this scene at 16 pictures a second on Super Pan, taking enough footage to show the wall being blown out by the explosion and the place set on fire from the molten metal. If shot correctly this will appear very spectacular on the screen, but remember, shoot it in the open and extinguish the flames with Wet Sand.

THE EXTERIOR ALLEYWAY

The alleyway is a simple job, for only one wall is required, approximately 12 ft. long by 9 ft. high with a window set 5 ft. from the ground. As I see it, an alleyway suggests cobblestones, offset by large pieces of rock outcropping on which the house may stand, giving data on which to design our sketch of the completed set, as shown in drawing C.

The wall is constructed from 1/8th three-ply of the cheapest variety, nailed to rough 3 by 2 deal battens. The casement window, not made to close, is therefore only a rough representation of a window made from rough 2 by 1 deal nailed together. Glazing consists of thin 16 oz. drawn sheet window glass held in by small pins, and don't make the mistake of cleaning the panes. The dirtier they appear the better. Mix a batch of Plaster of Paris taking care not to make it too wet, then proceed to daub the board with the plaster, starting from the ground level, painting the board with a solution of painters' size immediately beforehand.

B. Reproduction of model for steel-mill, giving camera angle and lens centre (c) and (f) (f), the explosion chambers

Scale $\frac{1}{8}$" *to* 1 *ft.*

C. Alley-way set built for the shadow sequence

Scale $\frac{1}{2}$" *to* 1 *ft.*

Incidentally, the set is raised up on two sets of builders' planks, for the cobbles, later. Don't take any great care in applying the plaster, daub it on any old how, the rougher the better. It gives atmosphere.

Along the lower edge add an extra thick layer of plaster about 1 ft. high, painting the whole wall when dry with painters' size. Next, lay a double layer of Hessian 4 ft. wide along the whole length wall, nailing it down with carpet nails. This presents a surface higher at the base of the wall than a foot or so away, giving a step appearance that can be used to advantage. See that the Hessian is pulled tight when nailing down and on the surface smack down lumps of wet plaster, irregularly in varying shapes and sizes to represent cobblestones, building up the rock outcroppings by first laying down empty boxes or tins as a foundation to save plaster, when shaping their irregular outline. For the pipes, use odd bits of piping, and either fake the grating or use a genuine one.

Now paint the wall light grey, the base black and the cobbles dark grey, painting the window frame, the pipes and grating a dull black. Fix the lighting to cast the shadows as shown in C, painting in the high lights with light grey, on the pipes, etc., or emphasising the black shadows with black paint.

The action takes place offset. Only the shadows of figures meeting can be observed, thrown on the wall by the moonlight. The attack on the man who resisted and his fall are all mimed in grotesque form to produce that dramatic atmosphere so necessary to the success of the plot.

The set is also used in other scenes in the film, that do not concern us here. Unfortunately, space will not permit the completion of our settings this month, they will be continued next month with details of the kitchen set, camera angles and lighting explanations.

Meanwhile write and tell me how you like or dislike this new series, presented for the first time in any magazine in the world.

The Cold Light Illuminant

There are several types of optical systems employed by the various manufacturers of 35 mm. and 16 mm. projectors. By this, we are not to be confused with the sound head optical system, but only by that part of the machine known as the cold light illuminant.

The light from the projector lamp has to be focussed down to the film gate aperture and the manner in which it is done is the basis of the discussion.

Some projectors employ the direct beam system, others use mirrors, condensers or prisms, some use pre-focussed lamps, others adjustable, whilst others use a combination of both, and so forth.

But on the choice of projector lamps, obviously the pre-focussed type offers the best advantages both as regards light and manipulation. The adjustable type are unsatisfactory for several reasons, every time a lamp is changed it has to be focussed up, and in addition to the fact that moving a very hot bulb about is anything but a pleasant operation, there is the question of reaching the proper focal point that gives the correct even field of projected light on the screen.

The precise positioning of the filaments of the pre-focussed types in respect of the lamp base is accomplished through the use of an accurate centering ring and precision socket or lock, eliminates the troubles encountered with the adjustable type. The mirror and prism types not only reduce light transmission efficiency but introduce other intricate adjustments that call for frequent adjustments, cleaning and part replacements.

One projector lamp manufactured by Philips has a mirror enclosed within the bulb of the pre-focussed filament, in which no cleaning is necessary and no adjustments to make.

Lamps of higher wattage should be efficiently air-cooled, a blower is necessary to ensure long life.

Screen Flicker

Screen flicker depends primarily on the number of times per second that the projector shutter interrupts the light beam. The greater the number of interruptions, the less the flicker, and depending upon the design of the shutter, more or less light is allowed to be passed to the screen.

The shutter interruptions differ considerably on different makes of projectors. On the Bell & Howell Filmosound model for instance the shutter interruptions occur 78 times per second, on the De Vry 48 times, yet there is hardly anything to choose on the question of flicker between the two, and the light values are comparably good when considering the discrepancy in light values. The B. & H. 1000-watt type, however, has the highest foot-candle record, giving the more brilliant picture without any trace of flicker on 24 or 16 picture speeds compared with any other machine in the world.

This will prove that the shutter design plays the important part in the elimination of flicker of which there are several types. There are single bladed, two and three bladed disc shutters, some are perforated to allow more light to pass, there is also the barrel or drum type. The latter, in my opinion do not provide a uniform distribution of light to the screen due to the necessity of having to place the condenser a considerable distance from the aperture, thus reducing the light efficiency.

D. M.

EQUIPMENT—CRITICISMS AND ADVICE

The intermittent movement principle; buying a screen; sound efficiency

By David Myers

(our new technical expert)

There has been a tendency of late on the part of certain 16 mm. manufacturers to introduce into sub-standard machines the intermittent movement principle, i.e. a movement consisting of a cross and cam action to draw the film into the projection aperture, such as is employed for all 35 mm. projectors.

Sweeping claims are made regarding the superiority of this type of movement, but one has to be sceptical regarding its application to 16 mm.

Because of its smaller size and greater screen magnification, accurate positioning of each individual picture is absolutely essential, much more so than in the case of 35 mm. As no doubt past owners of such equipment will admit, a slight but increasing vertical picture jump becomes apparent as the machine wears—this must be so.

So observe when buying this type of machine that the projected picture is dead-steady on the screen, and make allowances for decimal wear on the cross and cam which will definitely give you the "vertijumps" sooner or later, plus the expense of intricate part replacements.

Shuttle and claw movements are more satisfactory, they ensure silent operation and long life. One-piece shuttles have advantages over the multiple component types because of the large number of varying surfaces. When it becomes necessary to provide adjustments to compensate for wear, slight "play" at one or more of the various wearing points would result in an accumulated variation which would cause screen unsteadiness.

Claw Movements

Claw movements, whilst better in some respects than the intermittent cross-action, move in a path which is not accurately parallel with the aperture plate and this action is liable to produce rather rapid strain in the perforations. Unsteady pictures because of inaccurate location of the claw bearing points are quite common.

But I am afraid that it would be a difficult proposition to find a machine that provides all the refinements that I have in mind, but only by the pooling of collective practical experience can it ever be hoped eventually to arrive at a safe standard.

For instance, look at the constant damage being done to film by the use of stationary sound drums? These cause rapid wear due to the film rubbing over the stationary metal. Film joints or split perforations, oil and dirt will also cause subsequent variation in the pitch of the reproduced sound. Shrinkage or kinks in the film cause inevitable variations too, and shrinkage of film is one of the serious drawbacks to sub-standard.

Go seriously too into the type of film gate, casual examination might reveal what is termed side tension, but it is probably useless for film preservation if surface tension is also applied, since surface plates or runners introduce the hazard of rapid film wear.

★

The choice of a cinema screen calls for some consideration, durability combined with efficiency being foremost if the screen is to be of the portable type.

There are types manufactured for every purpose, for rear and front projection, perforated rubber and porous net for sound. Silver, gold, glass beaded, opaque, linen, and even plaster for silent films, and for sound too where the loud speakers are usually placed at the side or underneath the screen.

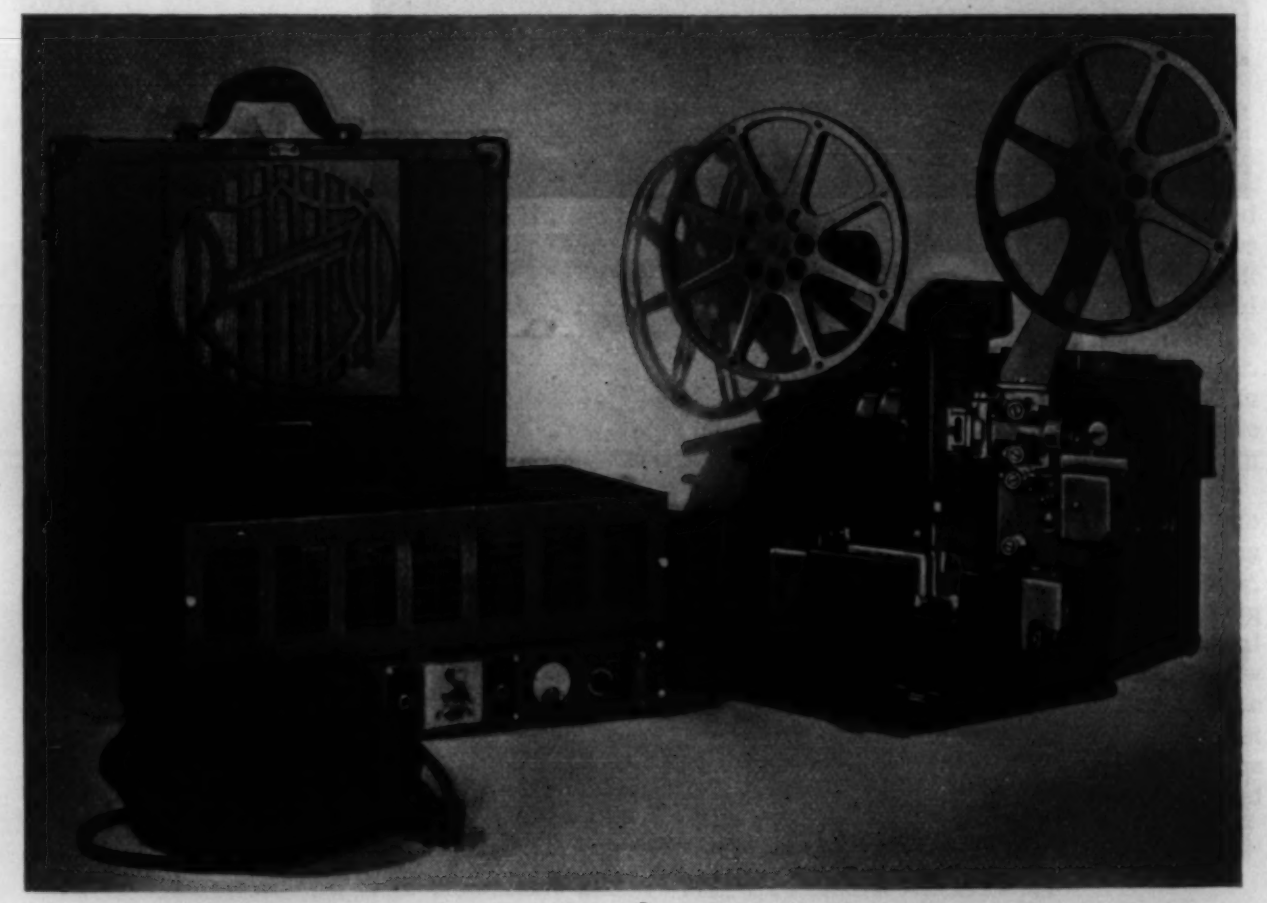
The type most suitable for non-theatrical use is undoubtedly the "portable" which can be obtained in dustproof boxes that require no more than a single hand-lift to erect them ready for use, these are made up in sizes up to twelve feet by nine feet in silver, glass beaded or plain white.

You should note that the height of a screen should be threequarters of its width, remember too that if your hall is wide there is nothing to beat a plain white screen as the light values fall off very considerably when viewing the screen from the side on silver, less so on glass beaded, but hardly at all on a plain white surface.

Screens are made seamless up to twelve feet width on other than perforated screens, and the latter are not suitable for rolling up. Pay strict attention to the canvas material and dope, it may be liable to stretch, crease or crack after little use. Ask the question "Can it be readily and successfully cleaned, and at what cost?"

Equally important is the lifting mechanism which is responsible for lifting and lowering the screen into its housing, this should be very, very robust and accurate to no small degree.

Such screens are obtainable from Messrs. R. F. Hunters Ltd., and The Perforated Front Projection Screen Co. Ltd., and others.



Bell & Howell's 1000 Watt Filmosound outfit.

Speed Control—The Secret of Good Sound

The Bell & Howell products are known the world over for their exceptional reliability and performance. There are several models to choose from, and the only difference between them is that the more costly models have more refinements, but actually mechanically and electrically there is nothing between them. Like a watch, they present precision in the full sense of the word, they have a backing and guarantee that no one else offers—i.e. indefinite, and the sound is persistently maintained at a high degree of efficiency. There are reasons for this good sound, an intricate but efficient speed control is built into the motor circuit which maintains constant speed and rules out that unfortunate wobble and "wowyness" that one is so unfortunately acquainted with on several other 16 mm. makes.

Every known refinement is incorporated in these projectors plus complete originality in almost every way, what more could be desired than the limit of screen brilliance and undistorted speech output of 25 watts of really good sound?

The exciter lamp operating on a frequency of 20,000 cycles rules out any hum possibility from this source, and the amplifier is capable of reproducing recorded frequencies from 40 to 9,000 cycles. At a recent test with a photometer, twenty-two foot candles were recorded in the centre of the screen on a projector throw of nearly thirty feet, and the fall off in light values to the outer edges of the screen was only fractional.

In a recent rush to supply outfits for the world market, two thousand outfits were turned out in the works in one month! If this is any indication of the growing popularity of these machines, then it is surely a guidance for your reference.

Equipment (cont.)

The G.B. "N" type

This compact efficient outfit requires little introduction. On the merits of actual performance it has found its way on to several of H.M. Battleships—where the "N" stands first and foremost for the "Navy." H.M.S. "Hood" tops the naval list and the "Queen Mary," the passenger service.

Fitted into fireproof and weatherproof cases, each unit weighs something less than one cwt., easy to handle and fit up.

Two thousand feet capacity spool boxes are employed allowing for 20 minute runs, a bi-plane projection lamp is used for screen illumination, and the light is reasonably good.

The mechanism is silent in running, being totally enclosed, the film threading operation is simple but requires infinite care if faulty starts and subsequent film damage are to be avoided.

It employs a long gate which ensures a steady picture, and is adaptable for both front and rear projection.

The amplifier is compact and provides an undistorted output of twelve watts, comprising a three stage unit assembled on a cast aluminium frame with a meter panel. The latter provides a ready guide for efficiency or failure of the valves. A moving coil loudspeaker of special construction is employed.

The projector, being entirely enclosed, is at a disadvantage where long hours of continuous projection are necessary. The building up of the heat within the enclosed space is quite considerable, and cannot help to maintain the film in first-class condition to say the least, but nevertheless the "N" type portable is a powerful contender for first place on the British market.

Philips 35mm. portable

The Philips 35mm. transportable sound film reproducer and projector represents in my opinion the Rolls Royce of the non-theatrical apparatus. It incorporates practically every known refinement and is singularly original in its design having several outstanding advantages over other makes. It is robust in construction, silent running, and should last for many years without mechanical part replacement. It loads 3,000 feet of film, it employs a unique illuminant of great power that gives a good picture up to throws of 110 feet—a 50 watt amplifier incorporating a gramophone reproducer and provision for microphones. It is simple and quickly set up for operation: it is adaptable for input voltages varying from 85 to 285 alternating current and will operate off any lighting circuit as the operating load is only 5.5 amps on a 230 volt supply.

An original system of speed control is incorporated. A pair of electrical tickers operating a resistance in series with the driving motor, maintains constant speed notwithstanding any variation in the mains voltage or frequency or both. A five-way control in the amplifier allows for ample tone correction for acoustical changes, etc., and sound from film or gramophone is high grade. H.M.S. "Emerald" after three years in the East India Station was returned to home waters recently with a "Philips" that had been running some three hours daily under extreme tropical conditions. Although the insulation had perished to a degree of instability, it was still reproducing good sound and was mechanically intact, a credit to the boys in blue. This is but one example of the performance under most exacting conditions.

Correct Use of Diffusers

Amateurs often envy the professional's work, and make all manner of excuses, as to why they themselves cannot produce similar results.

Both, however, have the same basic requirements: negative stock and a lens. Logically, only by using the lens to the best advantage can you obtain high quality results. In the endeavour to obtain the greatest possible assistance from your lens the following hints will be of importance, technically.

In the studios, matting and diffusing are two of the greatest helpmates of the cameraman. Diffusing as suggested by its name consists of introducing diffusion between lens and subject, consisting of various qualities of ordinary gauze.

Gauze is sold in various degrees of coarseness, thus by introducing a frame of fine gauze immediately in front of the lens a hazy, foggy atmosphere will be introduced into the scene. By varying the quality of gauze, one can vary the degree of diffusion from thick fog to a slight mistiness in a dramatic scene.

For variation in appeal of a shot, one can cut out portions from the centre of the gauze, making absolutely sure beforehand to stretch the gauze uniformly to its maximum limit. In the forest sets of Warner's *Midsummer Night's Dream* diffusion of this type heightened the beauty of the setting, almost beyond belief, considering the simplicity of the method employed. For this type of shot the gauze is dyed black, but if a ghostly effect be required, use white gauze with a large enough hole in the centre to give a margin of lens safety (in case the actor moves too quickly in panning). When developed, a hazy detached margin will appear around the frame-edge with the actor clear cut in the centre.

A word of warning, use diffusion with intelligence, not just for an effect and "hang the picture." For example, to intensify the ghost shot, shoot the scene outdoors in the daylight,

"Midsummer Night's Dream"

using panchromatic film and a red filter. The red filter will darken the sky and make the face appear bloodless if a reddish tint is applied to the face and hands. With the camera still running, swap filters, this time using a green one. The scene changes instantly to a flash back when the ghost was a live man. The green filter reveals the actor in all the details of his make-up ; his face has now a swarthy look, his clothes are lighter, the scene a pleasant summer landscape, and you will be surprised at the correction the green filter will impart to the sky.

Another swap, and the red filter reverses the process. Thus, by quickly inserting several whole frames of gauze in varying progressive thicknesses the scene slowly fades.

H. CHEVALIER.

Problem of Distortion

Warner's cameraman, Hal Mohr, is responsible for an ingenious adaptation to motion picture photography of a device well-known in still camera work from its earliest days.

Assigned to photograph *Bullets or Ballots* and *Green Pastures*, he discovered that both scripts contained scenes with background and foreground action occurring in the same set-up, and that to retain the full dramatic value of these scenes it was essential that both zones of action should be in sharp focus.

Mohr recalled that when he worked with a still camera it was a simple matter to get a near and distant object in focus simultaneously by swinging the ground-glass of the camera in relation to the lens. (Fig. 1).

As this method was not practicable with a film camera owing to the complicated gate mechanism Mohr set about devising a means of swinging the lens on a vertical axis relative to the plane of the film which would produce the same result.

In co-operation with the studio mechanical department he designed a mount on the ball and socket principle which permitted of the lens being swivelled several degrees in either direction about its optical centre. (Fig. 2). The problem of distortion was overcome by using a Leica Sumar lens which has an approximate coverage of twice

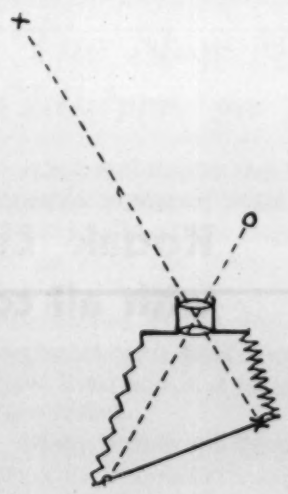


Fig. 1

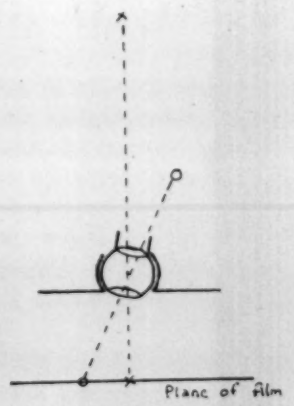


Fig. 2

the width of a film frame. A further refinement was the fitting of a control operable from outside the camera blimp.

It will be fairly obvious that this lens does not claim to be a universal focus lens in the true sense of the term, i.e. producing a pin-sharp image of everything from a few feet to infinity. It could be better described as a diagonal focus lens, as to take advantage of its properties the action to be covered must be laid on a diagonal from the back to the front of the set; the focus on either side of this diagonal falling away in the normal manner.

The marvellous news-reel pictures

of the

Coronation in the Abbey

were made possible by the use of

KODAK

SUPER X

NEGATIVE

(SPECIALLY TREATED)

Kodak Limited is proud to have co-operated with all concerned in the making of this splendid record of the great event.

SHATTER THE ILLUSION! by Andrew Buchanan

"Film-making is not for millionaires only" (No. 9 of the Series)

THE majority of film-makers, professional and amateur, are inclined to accept, too readily, the established formula for production—to regard the traditional types of film story as the only types and to consider vast studios essential in the making of good films. Originality in film-making must always be dependent on an ability to analyse ideas and to build them up sanely and logically in terms of film. A film treatment which does not reach a high standard in these respects must be immediately rejected. Sane reasoning is as important in film-making as good technique. The importance of the latter is seldom underestimated and the importance of the first is rarely stressed. There is a tendency amongst film-makers to neglect the wood for the trees.

Throughout our analysis of this complex art we have been slowly but surely breaking down traditions that are generally accepted. Now we are arriving at a clearer and a more definite form of approach to production. We have realised that the truly creative director who can co-ordinate all the various energies necessary in the making of a film is comparatively scarce. We have discovered that a big studio is not essential in the making of a great picture. We have even dared to question the value of dialogue and to ask whether it should form an integral part of motion picture. This last inquiry led us back to the basic principle of film—the narrating of stories by means of moving images. This basic principle is denied by allowing the dialogue to tell the story. The evolution of the silent into the talking film is often considered "progress," but the silent film is not dead. It is not only alive but it forms the foundation upon which the talking-film has built itself.

Stick to images

The emphasis on dialogue tends to force the images to play second fiddle, the size of that fiddle being immediately apparent when a talking picture is viewed in silent form. You will find characters gaily mouthing words to explain a situation which the picture alone does not explain. Through dialogue, a formula has been established, which, very strictly speaking, has diverted the film from its natural path. Attractive and smooth though the modern talking picture is, its method of treatment has tended to retard the progress of true film-making. To repeat, the film must always be dependent basically on moving images. Allied to this truth is the fact that most fictional films present a synthetic world. They depend upon the studio instead of on reality for their setting. When one realises that all other art forms fail to portray actuality so vividly, one will agree that the real possibilities of film-production seem hidden beneath a mountain of plaster settings, sprinkled with dialogue.

It might well be asked if this matters in view of the commercial success and entertainment value of the majority of feature films, and the answer is it matters, firstly, to the film itself, trying to express itself, and show what it can do; secondly, it matters to the creative artist anxious to make original films, and thirdly, it will ultimately matter to the industry which will reach a saturation point with its present product, and will then search in new directions for material.

The three-walled room

Personally, I have nothing against either the artificial settings in fictional films, nor the people who devise them, professional and amateur, providing I am always permitted to register the fact that they are excluding films from the screen which can portray the world as it really is, and make it serve as a background for the drama or comedy being enacted—thus divorcing the screen from the stage and a complete dependence on the three-walled room. Commercial and climatic reasons are largely responsible for films conforming, more or less, to the same studio methods, but the group which breaks away from all that kind of thing is bound to win success, just as Britain would have done, had she not imitated the production methods of Hollywood. These imitations have been made on costly lines, with English equivalents of American technicians, in studios, the originals of which may be seen in Hollywood. We cannot afford to copy Hollywood—our market is smaller—we face periodical crises—why? Because we have lacked originality. We have not grasped the opportunities which film offers. We have not begun to make British pictures quite unlike the pictures of any other nation. We have not exploited the country and shown those characteristic things only to be found within our shores. We have made costly films in settings which might have been built in Paris, Rome, or New York. Thus our pictures have not revealed Britain as American films have revealed America, synthetic though most of her productions are.

How could this be rectified, and what has it all to do with the student or independent director? The remedy can be found by beginning again, and shattering the illusion that film-making is possible only for millionaires. The small director can utilise his freedom to create new formulae. Firstly, he must decide to star backgrounds which are authentic. They are cheaper than the studio can provide, for they are ready made, and need no lighting. They are limitless—industrial—pastoral—cities—villages—the high seas—the winding rivers—airports, seaports, transport by road — coal mines — mountains — downs — churches — cattle markets — radio stations. My advice to the potential director, or the experienced, though unsuccessful one, is to plan productions on a fictional-documentary basis, so that whether one lives in Huddersfield, Heligoland or Hades, the location can be truly portrayed, framing whatever story one wishes to tell. The background shares the acting honours with the characters, each strengthening the other.

Linked to this policy is the necessity for constructing one's film so that it depends, as far as possible, upon moving images—even explanatory titles being reduced to a minimum. There is no finer training, and no greater hope for the film. If voices must be introduced, use them indirectly—expressing thoughts, as imaginative commentaries—uttered by unseen people. Do not confuse human voices with natural sounds—the latter being universally understood, in the same way that music is an international language. Natural sounds and music are the allies of moving images, and together can create the most powerful of all methods of narration.

The conclusion, therefore, is to plan film production, whether on humble or expensive lines, so that material is introduced which could not be utilised in any other media. A studio is essential for a multitude of reasons, but it should never tempt the director to stay within its walls, and depend upon it for his settings. The atmosphere of film-making has become altogether too theatrical, too unreal, and the hosts of people who are attracted, like moths, to the glare of the arcs, are mostly personalities with the theatre in their blood. This fact tends to influence the film in the wrong direction, and although modern technique has enabled slick, amusing dialogue to be presented by attractive human voices, and extremely entertaining situations to be devised pictorially, the student must keep before him the mental plan for the universal film, and seek to express it.

My study of amateur production has led me to believe that a greater percentage of films based on the fundamental silent technique which is so desirable, are to be found outside the professional industry, because, ironically enough, lack of funds force the amateur to produce without sound. I am not suggesting that the old silent film is preferable to the talking picture, but that the talking picture must be transformed into a sound film, constructed upon silent film technique, and this the amateur can practise with advantage, both to himself and the industry.

"The Shoe-Maker's Children go Ill Shod"

It is a well-known fact that in tropical countries cinemas equipped with air conditioning command a full house throughout the day on account of the relief and relaxation afforded to patrons. It is amazing that we, in this country, should be so ill-equipped in this respect, when for years the engineers who have pioneered air conditioning have lived within a stone's throw of the site we now review.

Many people will be asking how this system of accurate atmospheric control has become possible—the answer is vacuum refrigeration. In order to provide the desired conditions in the Alhambra, the new cinema which Oscar Deutsch is building on the site of the old Alhambra, the air admitted will be washed, cooled and dehumidified, which process entails the use of water spray air washers calling for immense quantities of intensely cold water. In the process of vacuum refrigeration to be employed the spray water is circulated through a vacuum under which treatment, and in accordance with a basic physical law, partial evaporation occurs with a consequent drop in temperature.

THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORLD

An Analysis of Stereoscopic Photography by LIONEL H. HUITT, B.Sc

STEREOSCOPIC vision, an asset of fundamental importance in real life, is at last to be added to movement, colour, and sound in the cinema thereby advancing the art of the film another great leap towards the perfect illusion of reality—that ultimate goal of the technician.

Moving pictures are at present flat, restricted to a two-dimensional screen, and merely a single step ahead of a coloured print or poster. We are forced by virtue of this limitation to look *at* them. Admittedly they are endowed with lifelike movement but we still look *at* their moving form. With stereoscopic projection we shall look *into* the "picture" (though such a term is not now strictly applicable), and shall be conscious of distance and depth, relief and solidity, perceiving an apparently real three-dimensional world about us.

Actors and objects, inflated with a new sense of solidity and bulk, will appear in space, both in front and behind the screen. The russet foreground of a woodland view, stretching forward to within a few feet of our eyes, will seem genuinely miles away from the distant hills and the horizon. The whole magnificent panorama of nature, alive with movement and colour, can now be transported to the cinema for our delight, not merely as a picture or even in the likeness of a model, but complete with every semblance of reality, vibrant with that "something" which differentiates the false from the true.

LEFT EYE RIGHT EYE

Fig. I. A Stereoscopic "twin" picture. Each frame in a stereoscopic cinematograph film consists of a pair of photographs as above. Note the relative movement of the background in the two views. The pictures are full of such variations most of which are, however, too minute to be noticed without precise measurement.

Depth and space

Shots taken from the roof of a skyscraper looking down to the creeping traffic far below, or from the topmast of a schooner swinging in a swelling sea, by virtue of the amazing illusion of depth and space, will give rise to a marked sensation of giddiness and vertigo. A retreating figure will not only decrease in size as is the case with the flat film, but will positively move away, receding from a position well in front of the screen to as far into the distance as the producer may care to arrange. Those beautiful lake views which were the highlights of *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, breath-taking in their exquisite colouring, will be transformed into tangible reality. The surface of the rippling water, reflecting the green pines and dappled with the shadows of overhanging foliage, will appear so amazingly natural that one will feel the urge to rush forward and plunge into its limpid coolness. Such scenes as these have, in the past, suffered rather severely from the limitations of "one-eyed" photography, for reflections *in* and shadows *on* a water surface have an imperative need of bi-ocular vision to bring out their true beauty—a beauty almost entirely dependent on their correct relative positions in space.

In addition to this remarkable heightening of reality, the innovation will also permit our eyes to function in a much more normal manner, allowing them to converge for a near object and diverge for one further away, as in real-life vision. The eyes will remain definitely fresher in consequence.

The term "picture," meaning as it does the portrayal of a natural scene on a flat surface, is quite inadequate to describe the new sensation and the need will arise for the coining of a brand new word in honour of the occasion. "Talking Pictures" will pass away, and "Talking Spacies" may reign in their stead.

The stereoscopic idea is, of course, by no means in its infancy; in fact, it is nearly as old as photography itself. Most people must be familiar with the ordinary stereoscope and have peeped through twin eye-pieces of the apparatus at the double pictures behind. Perhaps some may have wondered why the effect has not yet been utilised for film projection, considering the amazingly lifelike appearance of such stereoscopic views. The problem of adapting the idea to the cinema is not, however, as easy as it might seem, and the solution lay in finding some means of allowing each of our two eyes to see a separate and distinct picture. The necessity of this will be realised if an object is held at arm's length in front of the face. When looked at with the right eye only, the object and the background are in certain relative positions, but when viewed with the left eye, the positions change—the background seeming to move quite a distance to the left. Each eye is always receiving its own distinctive picture; for instance, objects which appear in a line for the right eye are not so when viewed with the left. Although the variations in the two eye views are frequently quite small, they are absolutely essential for stereoscopic vision, as our brains judge distance and depth by their aid.

To re-create the effect by photographic means, it is necessary to take two pictures, one for the left eye and one for the right, and this is achieved by a double camera having two lenses about eye-distance apart. The ordinary stereoscope is merely a device for allowing the left eye to see only the photograph taken with the left lens of the camera, and the right eye only that taken with the right. The two eyes then act normally and combine the two photographs in the mind to re-create stereoscopic vision.

There is a very great difference, however, between producing the effect with a hand-held apparatus and re-creating the same result for an audience of a thousand, but the fundamental requirements are the same. Each eye of the individual must see its proper and appropriate picture.

The simplest way of attaining this result is by means of what is technically known as the "Anaglyphic" method, every person in the audience being equipped with a pair of spectacles having one red and one green eye-piece. The two pictures of the stereoscopic "pair" are projected and superimposed on the screen, one being coloured green and the other red. The coloured spectacles allow the correct picture for the right eye to be seen only by the right eye, and *vice versa*. This Anaglyphic method has already been demonstrated on several occasions to the public, the most recent exposition being termed "Audioscopic" projection, as it combined sound with the stereoscopic effect. Unfortunately, though so simple in its essentials, the method is patently unsuitable for colour films.

Polarised light

A second line of approach utilises the properties of polarised light—the theory of which is rather complicated and too involved for easy explanation in a short article. Again, the audience is required to wear spectacles, but each eye piece is covered with what is apparently the same type of slightly tinted glass. Two pictures are thrown on to the screen and superimposed, the "left-eye" picture being projected by the aid of light polarised in an up-and-down direction, while the "right-eye" picture is produced by means of light polarised in a horizontal plane. Although the two glasses composing the spectacles may *look* identical they are actually very different, for the left eyeglass will only permit up-and-down light to pass through, and the right glass only light polarised in a horizontal direction. Through the medium of these selective glasses, each eye sees only that picture intended for it, and the combination of the right and left eye

The Three-dimensional World (cont.)

images, as in the ordinary stereoscope, gives rise to the stereoscopic effect. Colour films can be projected by this means and gain somewhat in their tone values, as the polarising spectacles tend to soften the rather strident white light. Two disadvantages are unfortunately inherent in the scheme. Polarised light de-polarises itself to a slight extent on reflection from the cinema screen and this causes the glasses to lose some of their selective quality. The main trouble, however, is that the spectacles must be kept truly horizontal if they are to work efficiently. Bending the head over to one side beyond a certain critical angle can seriously interfere with their correct working. This limitation of movement would certainly prove irksome to many of the younger generation who frequent the cinemas in pairs!

Electro-Mechanical Selection

The third method tackles the problem in a somewhat similar manner, but does the selection by electro-mechanical means. The spectacles utilised have two glass-covered apertures, each about ¾ in. long by ½ in. wide, which are alternately opened and closed to the passage of light by means of high speed vibrating shutters. The two pictures thrown on the screen are alternated very rapidly, the left-eye picture being shown for about a fiftieth of a second, and then withdrawn to make room for the right-eye picture which occupies the screen for the next fiftieth of a second. When the left-eye picture is in the place of honour, the left-eye aperture of the spectacles is open and the right-eye closed, and when the right-eye picture is shown, the reverse occurs. The speed of alternation is so high that the eyes are completely unaware of any flicker and each receives a seemingly continuous image of its appropriate view.

This method of electro-mechanical selection has occupied the minds of inventors for many years, and numerous patents have been taken out for its accomplishment. Only recently, however, has the idea been developed into a commercial possibility, with spectacles which can be made as light and comfortable as ordinary horn-rimmed reading glasses. As the process depends on absolute synchronisation between the projectors and the spectacles, each pair of the latter is fitted with a thin electric flex terminating in a small plug which fits into an unobtrusive socket in the arm of the cinema seat. The actual operating power required to work the spectacles is less than a third of that necessary to light a small electric hand torch.

Both the Anaglyphic and the polarised light methods attain their selective effect by biasing the eyes in a rather unnatural manner. Prolonged use of red and green spectacles will obviously numb the retinas of our eyes to other colour sensations, and on emerging from the darkened cinema into the bright sunlight outside (even at present, a rather trying experience), the eyes will require quite a time to get back to their normal state, and in the interim the strain may give rise to a headache. It is safe to predict that the polarising glasses will not cause such a noticeable after-effect, but so far very few data are available on the reaction of the retina to a long spell of polarised light, and the oculist will have to be carefully consulted before the process is adopted for general public use.

The electro-mechanical method (known technically as the "Stroboscopic") does not suffer from this drawback—the ordinary film having already demonstrated that high-speed "flicker," if properly controlled, is not only unperceived by the human eye owing to its persistence of vision, but produces no "hang-over" on the retina.

Many attempts have been made to give the stereoscopic effect without glasses, but although this is possible for a single observer or a small group, it is a commercial impossibility when applied to a normal cinema audience of five hundred souls and upwards. One ingenious inventor proposed using a huge revolving drum of about eighty feet in diameter, something like the circular railings round a bandstand. He carefully seated his audience around part of the periphery, looking through the palings towards the picture displayed near the centre, and then started the contraption revolving. The palings were so arranged that when one was blocking the vision of the left eye, the right optic was peering

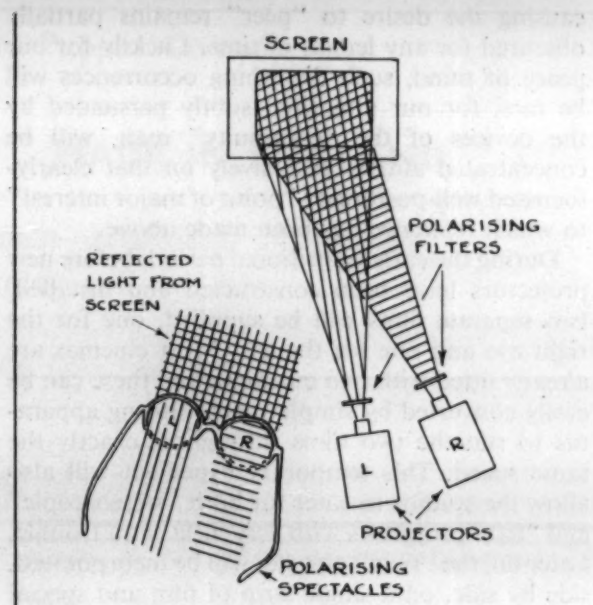


Fig. 2. **Stereo-projection using polarised light. The picture for the left eye is projected by means of light polarised in a vertical direction and that for the right eye by means of horizontally polarised light. The viewing spectacles have polarising-glass eye-pieces which select the correct picture for each eye, as indicated in the diagram.**

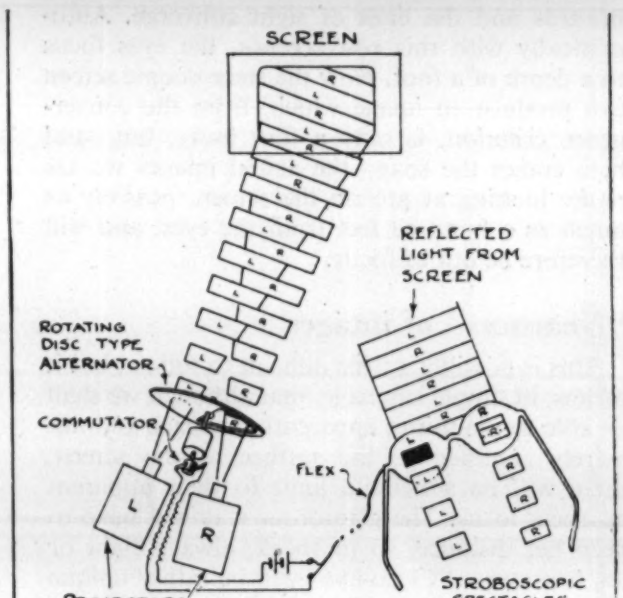


Fig. 3. **Stereo-projection by the Stroboscopic (electro-mechanical) process. The "twin" pictures are alternately shown on the screen, the speed of alternation being above 50 per second. The eye apertures of the spectacles are alternately opened and closed in synchronism. In the diagram the right eye aperture is shown open—allowing that eye *only* to see the right eye picture which is being projected. Both the "left-eye" projector and the left eye aperture of the spectacles are momentarily shut down.**

through a gap. No doubt (like the gadgets of Heath Robinson) the idea is thoroughly workable, but for some obscure reason, it does not seem to have impressed the film industry as a paying proposition.

And what will this innovation mean to the cinema business in general? Certainly a complete revision of the technique in the studio. Fake backgrounds will not be possible as at present, and those castle battlements, which in reality were drawn to a minute scale on transparent celluloid and held in front of the camera, will not work under the new regime. New ideas, however, will soon take the place of the old and the art of film faking will continue, but in a more complicated form.

Colour photography will receive a new impetus, for the novel illusion of depth produced by stereoscopic vision will demand the co-operation of colour to round-off and complete its almost perfect semblance of reality.

The mention of colour brings to mind those wonderful "Silly Symphonies," and the host of imaginary but famous characters in the cartoon sphere. What of Donald the Duck, Betty Boop and Pop-Eye? They, poor souls, are flat even before they are photographed. Will they in consequence be relegated to that limbo already tenanted by so many forgotten stars unable to make the grade when "talkies" arrived? Heaven forbid, for their passing would be a major catastrophe. Providentially for Walt Disney and his confrères, such cartoon characters can be assimilated into the new cinema with very little trouble and no extra work on the part of the artists themselves. The effect, however, will be radically different from that created by the normal type of stereoscopic film. The individual figures of B. Boop and D. Duck will appear as cut-out coloured cardboard pieces moving on a stage set with a drop curtain background and typical flat stage scenery. The extra third dimension will be represented only by the distance apart of the various figures in the cartoon (measured along our line of sight), and will not create an appearance of bulk or solidity in the characters themselves. They will still remain flat, bless them, but will have an extra third dimension in which to caper. It is quite conceivable, however, that future cinema audiences will welcome a spell of the existing flat type of coloured cartoon as a change from the stereoscopic talkie, just as at present a three-dimensional "real life" turn on the cinema stage constitutes an appreciated break in a programme of two-dimensional films. There are no real grounds, therefore, to fear that the "two-eyed" innovation will debar us from further acquaintance with the unique genius of the cartoon creators.

The studio camera will alter its appearance and blossom out with two lenses. The distance between the lenses will be variable and many new effects will be produced by manipulating

The Three-dimensional World (cont.)

them in different ways. For normal work, the distance between the camera's eyes will be about three inches, as this approximates to human sight, but the effect of relief can be greatly accentuated by increasing this dimension and correspondingly reduced by bringing the lenses nearer together.

Great care will have to be exercised in the early use of the new double-lensed cameras to avoid causing the cinema public unnecessary eye strain. A "close-up," if nearer than ten feet, will tend to make the observer's eyes work in an abnormal manner. This is due to the fact that our eyes automatically focus themselves to a degree directly related to the amount of their convergence. For example, when viewing a distant object, the eyes look along practically parallel lines of sight, and when so positioned, automatically focus to give a sharp definition of things far off. Should we look at something only a foot away, our eyes swing inwards and the lines of sight converge. Automatically with this convergence, the eyes focus to a depth of a foot. Now the stereoscopic screen can produce an image which, from the convergence criterion, is only a foot away, but—and here comes the snag—the actual images we are *really* looking at are on the screen, possibly as much as a hundred feet from the eyes, and will therefore be out of focus.

"Nearness" of images

This is possibly a trifle difficult to follow, but it means, in simple language, that although we shall be able to see things apparently in space and not merely confined to the surface of the screen, there will be a definite limit to their apparent nearness to us. The glamorous star will have to keep her distance, so to speak, always eight or ten feet away. "Close-ups" will be rather unique when first encountered; we shall visualise the heroine's emoting features, very much enlarged, but still ten feet away, and all those throbbing embraces will take place—ten feet away. How tantalising—but how safe! No gangsters will be able to bump us off; they may threaten most ferociously, but we shall merely grin, knowing that they are incapable of coming nearer to carry out their villainy. Even their bullets will disintegrate when this nebulous barrier is reached!

Although the coming of stereoscopic vision will give much greater freedom to our eyes, we shall still have to delegate certain of our ocular powers to the man behind the camera, resting content in the knowledge that he is most unlikely to abuse our trust. Focusing, for instance, will be entirely in his hands and we shall expect him, as a matter of decency, to focus his lenses on the "point of major interest" in the scene, be it a crouching panther, or a custard pie. There is, however, another and quite novel knack that he must acquire if he is to serve us faithfully, and that is to place his camera so that nothing of interest lies *just* outside our line of sight, hidden by a nearer object or just around a corner. In order to understand the importance of this, imagine yourself for a moment standing near a lamp-post waiting for a bus. On hearing something approach in the distance you turn, but find that the lamp-post is just obstructing your view. Immediately, and unconsciously, you move your head slightly to one side to "peer" round the offending post and so get a glimpse of the bus. This simple trick of "peering" in order to gain a better view, utilising what is known to science as the "parallax" effect, has become such an automatic reaction in our everyday life that it will be extremely difficult to suppress when in the cinema—the only place, unfortunately, where it will fail to produce the desired result.

The "parallax" effect

It is now possible, with the aid of stereoprojection, to recreate the selfsame lamp-post and the adjacent roadway in the cinema, and in a manner so realistic that it will tempt us, as in real life, to peep round the post to improve our view; but directly we move our heads, we shall get a shock, for the lamp-post instead of staying still, *will follow in the same direction*, and however hard we try, no matter where we go, it will persistently and annoyingly continue to obstruct our line of sight. This queer sensation, due entirely to the absence of the "parallax" effect, is really most weird when first experienced and, moreover, can be most exasperating if the object causing the desire to "peer" remains partially obscured for any length of time. Luckily for our peace of mind, such disturbing occurrences will be rare, for our attention, subtly persuaded by the devices of the "continuity" man, will be concentrated almost exclusively on that clearly-focussed well-positioned "point of major interest" to which reference has been made above.

During the early transitional period, before new projectors have been constructed and installed, two separate films will be supplied, one for the right eye and one for the left. Most cinemas are already fitted with two machines and these can be easily converted by simple synchronising apparatus to run the two films through at exactly the same speed. This temporary expedient will also allow the studios to cater for both "stereoscopic" and "flat" projectors with very little extra trouble. Later on, the "twin" pictures will be incorporated, side by side, on a single strip of film and special apparatus will be devised for the double projection. A valuable patent for this idea has quite recently been taken out by Monsieur Louis Lumière, that Grand Old Man of the photographic world, who has already done so much for the realisation of the stereoscopic ideal.

The fading screen-edge

With two-dimensional films it is the custom to confine the pictures within a sharply defined black border. This may prove rather irksome with the new effect and will probably be superseded by a more appropriate type of surround which fades away gradually from the edge of the picture. Something indefinite is required which will not appear to be fixed at any particular position in the auditorium. The area occupied by the projected picture on the screen will, as time goes on, increase in size, throwing out this indefinite but limiting border as far from our line of sight as possible.

The requisite spectacles to be used by the patrons will at first be issued from the box-office, the management asking for a small deposit to ensure their safe return. Each pair will be freshly sterilised and the bridges and side-pieces (which fit over the ears) will probably be encased in hygienic rice-paper, so that they may be readily acceptable to the most fastidious. Inveterate cinema-goers will, no doubt, invest in their own private spectacles and, where necessary, have them made up to the same prescription as their ordinary glasses.

Cine Societies and Royal Photographic

Early in 1936 the Committee of the Kine Section of the Royal Photographic Society appointed a Sub-Committee, consisting of Mr. T. S. Lutas, Mr. H. Walden, A.R.P.S., and Mr. G. C. Weston, F.R.P.S., to consider the relationship of the Kine Section with amateur cine societies. The scheme which was worked out by that Sub-Committee has now been put into operation.

In effect, it provides machinery for the mutual assistance of those cine societies whose work aims at contributing to the advancement of cinematography. The first work which is being undertaken is the preparation of panels, both of competition judges and lecturers, who are prepared to assist Federated Societies. Four meetings annually will also be held at the Headquarters of the R.P.S., at 35 Russell Square, London, W.C.1, at which members of societies will be able to meet those from other societies and learn what they are doing. Federated Societies receive the monthly journal of the R.P.S. for circulation amongst their membership and, when a member of a Society personally joins the R.P.S., certain benefits accrue to the member and to his Society.

It has been found possible to fit the new organisation into the existing scheme of federation of "still" photographic societies which already operates through the "Photographic Alliance," and the Cine Federation becomes a member of the Alliance. In view of the association with the Kine Section of the R.P.S., two representatives of the latter sit on the Federation Committee.

Until such time as circumstances require, the Federation will not be regionally divided. The constitution provides, however, for the provincial members, in the matter of sending deputies to meetings and recording votes in writing. Also, for the time being, each constituent society is entitled to a representative on the Committee.

The annual subscription is £1. 1*s*., or, in the case of a Cine Section of a Photographic Society already affiliated to the R.P.S., 10*s*. 6*d*.

It is hoped that the membership will at first approach twenty. The following have already formally entered into membership: Beckenham C.S., Birmingham P.S. (Cine Section), Finchley A.C.S., Grimsby P.S. (Cine Section), Ilford A.C.S., Kodak Works P.S., Leatherhead Cine Circle, Manchester F.S., Montagu Pictures (Newcastle-on-Tyne), South London C.S., West Essex F.S., Whitehall C.S., Wimbledon C.C. Other societies are putting the matter before their membership.

The Chairman of the Federation is Mr. H. Walden, A.R.P.S., the Hon. Secretary: Mr. F. P. Barnitt, Filmers, Forest Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and the Hon. Treasurer: Mr. W. Sugden.

To recreate the perfect illusion in the cinema, *all* the human senses should be fully catered for. Sight and hearing are, however, the most important. With stereoscopic vision added to movement, colour and sound, ninety-five per cent of the illusion is achieved, and considering the great advance towards reality attained by the new "two-eyed" technique, we shall be able to await, without undue impatience, the final addition of touch, taste, and smell.

FILMS OF UNUSUAL INTEREST

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"L'ORDONNANCE"	6,930 ft. "A"
"THE BELLS OF BELGIUM" (*Insight into the creation and manipulation of many famous carillons*)	1,240 ft. "U"
"HANDICRAFTS OF BELGIUM" (*An interesting documentary*)	910 ft. "U"
"THE MASCOT" by Starewitch. Puppet Comedy. (*An entertainment in miniature*)	2,000 ft. "A"
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"OUR FIGHTING NAVY" Running commentary (*With the authority and co-operation of the Navy*)	5,520 ft. "U"

Director of Music: Capt. R. P. O'Donald, M.V.O. Viewed and described by John Betts.
Liaison Officer for the Admiralty: Capt. R. W. Wilkinson, R.N. retd. O.B.E.

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"MUGGIN V.C."—Boer War Story, by Crick Martin	598 ft.
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